

FREEMASONRY AND NAUVOO



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Freemasonry and Nauvoo

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Introduction

Between the years 1839 and 1846 the people of the State of Illinois, especially the members of the Fraternity of Freemasons and of the Mormon Church, had an unpleasant experience in Hancock County where Joseph Smith and his followers established themselves. The primary concern of this document is an historical description of what happened between the Mormons and the Masonic Fraternity during those trying years. Unfortunately, the subject is one fraught with much emotional heat which is made more intense because of the lack of complete and reliable records from the time. As a researcher studies the literature purporting to describe the relationship between Lodge and Church which existed from 1840 to 1860 in Illinois, he soon discovers that almost all of it has been prepared by partisans who support one group or the other, and whose work always seems polemic in nature with fact, opinion and assumptions intermingled with little support and often with no direct documentation or reasoned rationale. Some writers even vacillate from one position to another within their writings. This document will attempt to present an accurately documented description of the happenings involving Illinois Masons and the Mormons in Western Illinois during 1840-1850. This historical account will be followed by commentaries written by men who admit to being Masons and not of the Mormon faith, an article by Masonic writer, Robert Barnard, who was born and reared in Warsaw, Illinois, and will conclude with a bibliography designed to include the arguments of not only the extreme positions, but also of the middle ground. Hopefully, this approach will allow any reader to judge the merit of the work itself, and also stimulate a more educated discussion of the subject within the Masonic and Mormon communities, especially where their memberships overlap. This manuscript was begun by Alphonse Cerza, Grand Historian of Illinois, who just before his

death asked that I promise to complete it. Extensive revision has been made to the historical section, but Cerza's Commentary is completely his own and reflects his personal views. He wished to thank Attilio Parisi for assistance in this project.

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The History

Any consideration of Mormonism should begin with an introduction of Joseph Smith, whose acceptance as a prophet and spokesperson for God is essential to the existence of the Mormon faith. Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805, at Sharon, Vermont (Hill 35). His father lost much money in speculative ventures and so the family moved often in attempts to improve their nearly impoverished condition and to gain a feeling of security (Hill 35). By 1820 the family was living in Palmyra, New York, where Joseph became interested in the occult, and, following the lead of an occult treasure hunter who had passed through the countryside, began to claim that he could "witch water" and find buried treasures by using a "seer stone" (Brodie 20). One of his earliest ventures failed, angering those who had hired him and resulting in his arrest and conviction on charges of fraud (Hill 65). One of the men who felt defrauded was his own future father-in-law who, for the rest of his life, denounced Smith as a con-man and a great fraud (Brodie 418). At about this time, Joseph Smith claimed to have had his first visit from the Angel Moroni. In the vision, Smith claimed, the angel revealed to him a command from God that he, Joseph Smith, was to become his spokesperson on earth, and that he should re-establish God's apostolic church as it had existed during the time of Jesus Christ (Stewart 18-19). In 1830, Smith published the *Book of Mormon* and went through the legal steps to establish the Mormon Church, which task was completed on April 6, 1830 (Hill). This volume will not concern itself with the development of the group as a church, nor with its religious claims and beliefs. These are matters of faith and conscience which are not debatable and upon which each person must decide in his own time. However, the religious ferment and fervor of Western New York during the period in question cannot escape the attention of interested scholars.

The 1820's were a time of religious unrest in upper New York where Joseph Smith was growing up. Cults formed and dissolved.

People were turning to the occult to learn magic and Abrac which they felt could be used to improve lives which they found lacking in some way (Thompson 9, 15). It was an emotional time with people clamoring to find salvation and often falling to the ground in religious fits or babbling in tongues as "the spirit" moved them (Stewart 12). The people had tired of the traditional preachers of hellfire and damnation and were willing to experiment and to grasp at any hope offered with gentler hands. Traditional revivalists began to steer clear of Western New York, terming it a "burned over district" (England 16-17). In his book, Hoekema tells how Joseph Smith chose no church because he couldn't decide who was right and who was wrong and because a vision from God had commanded him to join no sect because they were all wrong (Stewart 15). The 1820's were also a time when Freemasonry was very active in Western New York, and people not included in its society were often very suspicious of its doings and intentions. They heard tales of the craft with its strange rituals and its magic. They read of a strange magic system, called Abrac, which was imparted to all new Masons and which could abate all troubles and, given the economic and political troubles of the day, these people often felt angry that this Mason's magic was not available to them (Thompson 9, 15). Then, amazingly the secrets of Freemasonry were given to them by one William Morgan and was found not to be magic at all, just a lot of talk (Morgan). When William Morgan disappeared in 1826, however, many New Yorkers were convinced that the Masons would go to any length to punish a defector and to protect their secrets. Thus, the fear and distrust of Masons began to grow until the Anti-Masonic Party was formed (Brodie 63). Joseph Smith, in his autobiography, discusses the religious ferment of Western New York at that time, but says nothing of the equally obvious anti-Masonic attitudes of the day even though Masonic and Mormon scholars alike admit that he had to be well aware of the anti-Masonic confusion and feel that Masonic ideas of necessity did influence the young man and his ideas. Published exposés, anti-Masonic lectures, and theatrical productions purporting to reveal all areas of Masonic ritual were abundant during the 1830's. Yet, despite the religious ferment in New York, or perhaps because of it, the body of Mormonism grew during the early years in New York. People had been bombarded too long with threats of hellfire, and found in the Mormon philosophy a more gentle, less condemning hope for the

future. Yet, as the Church community grew and its adherents began to practice the ideas revealed to them by the Prophet, their more traditional neighbors found it unnerving and suspicious. They began to make life difficult for the Mormons and so, before long, in January of 1831, Smith moved the headquarters of the Church to Kirtland, Ohio (Hansen *Experience* 123). Here, the flock found little solace for the persecution continued. A Church bank failed and its leaders were charged with fraud and theft and the Prophet encountered frustration at almost every turn (Hansen *Experience* 135). He, himself, was even tarred and feathered (Arrington 38). Yet, for a devoutly religious man, as Smith was, perhaps the most frustrating problem he had to face was the fact that religiously, people of the era were desperate for hope and when these people turned to Mormonism, quite often so did the members of the fanatic fringe and the undesirable misfits which in all ages seem to prey upon those in desperation. Records suggest that Smith soon became more selective in allowing converts and that he attempted to screen all candidates for leadership within the Church with great care (Brodie 100). He was determined to keep scoundrels out. Yet, while the Prophet concerned himself with strengthening the Church in one area, he encountered a challenge to his right to lead from another front. Some members of the Twelve, the ruling body of the Church, felt that Smith had failed them because of the persecution they were experiencing. Their challenge, however, found little support (Arrington 58). Thus, Kirtland, which was to be the center of the Church, was abandoned as the Prophet and his flock moved westward to a place in Missouri, near Independence, which the people came to call Far West (Hansen *Experience* 137). Over two-thousand came to establish Zion, their sacred city. In Independence, the citizens watched with astonishment, and then with trepidation, as a strange, aggressive and zealous people descended upon them, laid a cornerstone for a great temple, and organized an "Army of Zion," and, according to *The History of Jackson County, Missouri*, warned the people of the area that the county would soon be in their hands (qtd. in Taylor 41). Quickly battle lines appeared and night riders appeared to trouble the Mormon settlers. Joseph Smith pleaded for help from Missouri State officials and, when ignored, organized and sent an armed group called Zion's Camp from Kirtland, Ohio (Hansen *Quest* 48). This action served to fan the flames of hatred as the anti-Mormon Governor, Lilburn Boggs, calling the action armed sedition, called

up his militia, not to protect the Mormon settlers, but to stop Joseph Smith and his outside army. He issued a warrant for Smith's arrest on charges of treason and armed invasion of a sovereign state and ordered all Mormons to leave Missouri or to face extermination. "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good. Their outrages are beyond all description. If you can increase your force, you are authorized to do so, to any extent you may think necessary" (*History of the Church* Vol. 3, p. 175). Boggs quickly had Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and Amasa Lyman arrested by his state militia and charged them with treason for invading his state. Lyman was released and the Smiths easily "escaped" from jail, fleeing Missouri and crossing into nearby Illinois (Hill 255).

During the winter months of 1839, between two and three thousand Mormons crossed the icy Mississippi River and set up camp near Quincy, Illinois (Kimble 14). They had little and were quite surprised when the people of the surrounding area welcomed them warmly and enthusiastically. Food and used clothing were warmly offered and gratefully received (Roberts 21). Yet, this outpouring of welcome was really not totally altruistic, for the people of Western Illinois recognized these people would swell their population and would add to the statewide political influence of their area (Roberts 21). Warsaw was the largest city in Illinois at the time and she wanted her influence felt (Hallwas 70). Yet much genuine, spontaneous help was given to the Mormon immigrants as town meetings throughout the area were held to determine how best to aid the newcomers. Brigham Young arrived in the area in March of 1839 and quickly began to organize the faithful and to guide its activities. He was a genius in the way he organized the group and later used many of these ideas to guide the varied activities of the Church (Arrington 71).

Joseph Smith arrived in Quincy, Illinois on April 22 of 1839 and, after a thorough examination of the area, elected to settle his followers at a place called Commerce, which name he later changed to Nauvoo, "the beautiful place" (Hansen *Quest* 50). Quickly the young Smith began to buy up large tracts of land surrounding Commerce. These parcels he began to sell at reasonable prices, but at a profit, to his followers much to the chagrin of local persons involved in selling land at higher rates (Roberts 30-31). In May a general Church conference was held, the site at Nauvoo approved as

the site for the location of a Mormon village and a new temple and the Temple Endowments were instituted (Jessee 371, Stewart 158). The temple was to be 83 feet wide 128 feet long and 60 feet tall and of white limestone (Hill 283). At once Smith began to promote the city and to sell the remaining parcels of land he had bought. His followers flocked in from many states and countries to be near the Prophet and the Church. Within a few months Nauvoo surpassed the population of Warsaw and became the largest city in Illinois (Pease 349). By early 1842 over 16,000 Mormons resided in Hancock County with over 10,000 in Nauvoo (Brodie 363). Such phenomenal growth shocked the old time settlers of the county, especially since their major town, Warsaw, had lost its political and economic power to this new city with its strange ways and stranger beliefs. It is understandable, then, that the attitude of the people of Warsaw and Hancock County turned so abruptly from the warm altruism which welcomed the bedraggled refugees who fled from Missouri oppression, to the angry hatred of a people whose very existence, politically, socially, religiously and economically, was being threatened in a great and immediate way. Word had been received in Warsaw that Joseph Smith had even written down his plans for becoming President of the United States (Taylor 89-90). Many of the older settlers had undergone religious persecution in European homelands in earlier times and others were staunch Freemasons long steeped in its religious nature and its conservative traditions. Yet, even Masonry found its way into the heart of Nauvoo and of Mormonism.

FREEMASONRY IN ILLINOIS

Freemasonry had come to Illinois in 1805 when the first lodge in Illinois Territory was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Some years later, there were enough lodges for a Grand Lodge to form, however this Grand Lodge fell victim to the anti-Masonic hysteria which surrounded the Morgan affair in New York State. Illinois was to remain without a Grand Lodge until the second Grand Lodge of Illinois was founded in Jacksonville in 1840 (Turnbull 112). Formation of this Grand Lodge is quite interesting, for several Mormons were prominent in the proceedings. A thorough study of the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Illinois would be quite interesting, yet, this project like so many others, would suffer from the lack of complete records, the politics which

surrounded the founding of the Grand Lodge, and the almost concurrent establishment of the Mormon settlements in Illinois. Controversy resulted in secrecy, partisanship and defensive positions have been adopted on the part of both Mason and Mormon and thus, has the researcher's task of finding the truth been made almost impossible.

JOHN COOK BENNETT AND NAUVOO

No conclusive evidence exists to answer the question as to how or why Freemasonry came to Nauvoo. From the scant evidence extant, the best theory is that John Cook Bennett, a Mormon who had been made a Mason in Ohio, came to believe that Freemasonry could be of interest in unifying and promoting the interests of the Mormon Church in Illinois (Hogan *Bennett* 11). Bennett arrived in Illinois around June of 1838 and, having political ambitions, quickly took steps to advance himself. On February 20 of 1839, Governor Thomas Carlin commissioned Bennett a Brigadier-General of a branch of the Militia, and on July 20, 1840 advanced him to the rank of Quarter-Master General (Stewart 141). This advancement was indeed spectacular and historians have never been able to explain it.

Since he was a Mormon, it is not surprising that Bennett should try to contact the Prophet of the Church. Especially since Smith was growing in prestige not only in Nauvoo, but also statewide. According to biographer, Donna Hill, among the earliest correspondence between Bennett and Smith was a letter written to Smith in 1840 urging the Prophet to order the marshes near Nauvoo to be drained and offering to supply Nauvoo a quantity of quinine to be used as a cure for the "swamp fever" that was raging through the village (Hill 280). The quinine was accepted and proved quite effective in stopping the fever. Thus, did William Cook Bennett earn the gratitude of Joseph Smith, who soon invited Bennett to move to Nauvoo and to become a confidant and counselor to him. Bennett's abilities in politics were soon put to use as Smith sent him on a mission to Springfield. The mission resulted in the issuance of an extraordinary Charter establishing the City of Nauvoo and granting to that city and its Prophet startling powers never before granted within Illinois (Stewart 142). Among the most troublesome was a provision granting Nauvoo the right to establish its own laws and its own militia. Bennett's success was very quickly rewarded as Smith used his influence to have Bennett win election to the office of Mayor

and appointed his friend as Chancellor of the Mormon University, President of the Agricultural and Manufacturing Association and Commander of the Nauvoo Legion which Bennett was to organize, outfit and train (Brodie 268-269). As can be seen, Bennett's rise in the government and official family of the Church was phenomenal. He was becoming a figure to be reckoned with. Then, suddenly all changed, for in the summer of 1841 Joseph Smith learned that his right hand man had abandoned a wife and child in Ohio and had been expelled from a Masonic Lodge in that state (Morcombe 445-454). When confronted, Bennett, who had been representing himself as a bachelor, confessed to the Prophet and appeared contrite. It was only after reports that Bennett had tried to seduce a number of women in Nauvoo made several weeks later, that his star began to fall within the Mormon community (Stewart 163, Hogan *Involvement* 6). His positions within Nauvoo and the church gradually were taken from him until he was finally excommunicated on June 23, 1842 (Brodie 314). As quickly as he had risen to prominence within the Church, this man, so familiar with not only the internal workings of the institution, but cognizant of all aspects of its workings and the lives of its leaders, including the doings of its Prophet, Joseph Smith, became a bitter man who vowed to bring about the Prophet's downfall even if it meant destroying the Church. He began to lecture and to write scathing books about the evils of Mormonism. Modern scholars, both Mormon and non-Mormon, struggle to separate the facts from the bitter fiction which all are confident pervade the writings of this fallen "Saint" (Bennett). It is to other materials that non-Mormons must turn in order to fairly research the doctrine of plural marriage and other controversial teachings which the church adopted during this period of its formation.

The doctrine of polygamy, perhaps the most controversial religious doctrine in modern history, was supposedly revealed to Joseph Smith in 1841 (England 76). At first it was communicated only to Smith's closest associates and practiced solely by them (Arrington 102). According to Orson Pratt, one of the Twelve at the time, Smith felt that God expected each man to prepare for his godhood by producing as many male children as possible and that plural marriage was a part of that plan. Pratt noted that Smith used Biblical references to show that God approved such practices in the times of Abraham and Jacob. He also noted that John C. Bennett was

aware of the new doctrine (England 75-78). Even so, the doctrine did not meet with unanimous approval among the Mormon leadership of Nauvoo and was damned as immoral by all other religious groups in the United States. As knowledge of the practice and its initial secrecy filtered out of the Mormon community, religious groups were quick to respond, and to condemn, not only the doctrine newly revealed, but all other aspects of the church. The political aspirations of Joseph Smith also became apparent and the Prophet soon announced that he would be a candidate for the Presidency of the United States in the upcoming election (England 94). The idea of polygamy and its perceived threat to their wives, daughters, sisters and other relatives caused constant talk among the people of Hancock County, and was particularly disturbing to the Freemasons in the area, who had always upheld traditional religious values and customs and held women and the institution of marriage in great esteem.

FREEMASONRY COMES TO NAUVOO

Yet, there were Masons among the Mormons. Usually these Masons had been initiated before entering the Mormon faith and mostly in Eastern States. Among these Mormon-Masons was of course, John Cook Bennett, while Herber C. Kimball and Joseph Smith's brother, Hyrum had both been initiated into the Fraternity while living in New York State (Hogan *Vital* 5). Thus, it can be seen that the basis for the formation of a new lodge in Nauvoo existed in the city. All that was needed to petition for a new lodge to be formed was a specified number of Master Masons to sign the request and the sponsorship of a regular, recognized Illinois Lodge. In 1841, Bodley Lodge No. 1 in Quincy, Illinois, was approached to sponsor a new Lodge in Nauvoo. Lodge records for the June 28th meeting contain the following record:

A communication was received from John C. Bennett and others, of the city of Nauvoo, asking this Lodge to recommend to the Grand Lodge of the State certain individuals whose names were therein contained to be appointed Master and Wardens of a lodge to be established at said city; but as the persons were unknown to this Lodge as Masons, it was thought prudent not to do so. The letter was returned to Bro. Rogers, with instructions on how to act upon it
(Minutes June 28, 1841).

Yet, even though Bodley Lodge had refused to recommend the establishment of a Lodge at Nauvoo, one was established. No record can be found that the necessary recommendation was ever acquired, yet, the matter was taken from the hands of local Lodges and became a matter attended to by Grand Master Abraham Jonas who, at the time, was also Worshipful Master of Columbus Lodge No. 6. Jonas must have issued the recommendation from himself to himself, for there is no record in the minutes of Columbus Lodge that such a recommendation was ever approved. Mervin Hogan, prominent Mormon/Masonic scholar, suggests that there is extremely strong evidence to justify the belief that not a single Illinois subordinate lodge would have sanctioned the establishment of a lodge among the Mormons (*Hogan Official 4*). How and why Jonas issued the dispensation is not known, but it is known that Bro. Jonas did not act on the matter until after the Grand Lodge session which took place on October 4th and 5th of 1841. This allowed the matter to be settled in a positive manner and with as few objectors about as possible. Most scholars agree that Jonas was a shrewd politician who had his eye on a seat in the state legislature and was well aware of the swelling voting population of nearby Nauvoo.

On October 5, 1841 Jonas issued a dispensation to Nauvoo Lodge. Bodley Lodge immediately objected and the dispensation was rejected. (*Proceedings/Reprint 51*). Yet, ten days later, on October 15, 1841, Jonas defied the Grand Lodge, which was no longer in session, and again issued a dispensation for the new lodge (*Hogan Official 3*). Mervin Hogan, a Mason and Mormon scholar, has written at great length that the Masons made the first contact with Joseph Smith because they desired his good will (*Hogan Official 3*). He suggests that Abraham Jonas and others practically begged Smith not only to allow such a Lodge, but also to become a member of it when it was established. There is no evidence to sustain this theory and none to show that Joseph Smith was reluctant in this affair. It is also suggested that John Cook Bennett might have contacted Bodley Lodge on his own without the Prophet's knowledge, but this is highly unlikely, for Bennett was at that time a rising star in the church hierarchy and was doing all he could to cement his position as friend and counselor to Joseph Smith. In fact, Bennett's writings suggest that Smith's permission to form a Lodge at Nauvoo was given because the Prophet knew of the spirit of universal brotherhood which was the bonding factor between and

among Freemasons, and felt that such a spirit could help him to develop the same kind of indissoluble bonds among the priesthood of his developing church. Indeed, that such a spirit was sorely and immediately needed can be seen in the actions, and expulsion from the church, of John Cook Bennett, the recorded dissension of the antipolygamists and Brigham Young's later battles with William Rigdon and even Joseph Smith, Jr., all of whom were part of a Priesthood in seeming disarray.

Yet, Mason as well as Mormon admit that Abraham Jonas was also privately motivated. He desired a secure political office. He needed votes and a great block of uncommitted votes had just moved into Nauvoo. Still, based on the written evidence, the desire to form a Lodge at Nauvoo came from John Cook Bennett and the Mormon Church. Perhaps Grand Master Jonas was also pressured by his Deputy Grand Master, Judge James Adams, who had financed the formation of the Grand Lodge of Illinois and who, according to Mervin B. Hogan:

was a secret convert to Mormonism, a highly trusted personal friend of Joseph Smith's and who, within two years, was to be elevated to the office of Patriarch in the Mormon Church alongside Hyrum Smith, who held the same office (Hogan 1).

To be added to Hogan's theory that Abraham Jonas, acting with James Adams, helped to institute the Lodge at Nauvoo for political purposes, is a hypothesis that Joseph Smith, acting through this same friend suggested that a union of Masonry and Mormonism could benefit all involved. This theory is based on factual evidence showing that Smith was not apolitical, indeed his aspirations were greater than Jonas's, as can be seen by his announcement that he would campaign for the office of President of the United States (Flanders 300-301). Yet, without actual documentation, Hogan's theory and this theory are just speculation based upon circumstantial evidence. Hogan acknowledges that such speculation is not historical scholarship and condemns it, yet, sometimes uses just such evidence to prove theories he has put forth. Such speculations are interesting, they give cause and sometimes direction to useful discussion, yet, scholars, when without factual evidence, should avoid applying labels to men and events of the past; for, as can be seen from the above theory, if it can be stated in declarative terms that young Mormons were "pliable and amenable material manipulated and

promoted by three cunning Grand Masters” (Hogan *Statistics* 2), the label of cunning manipulator can also, and with just as much authority, be applied to Joseph Smith, the Prophet of Nauvoo. Even Mervin Hogan in *What of Mormonism and Freemasonry* states, “He (Smith) was confronted with the ever-present problems of harmony and unity, goodwill and devoted cooperation, within the Church; especially among the male members (Hogan 10). That Joseph Smith felt a need to find a unifying spirit for those in the Priesthood is evident in the writings of Anthony Ivins, former Church President, who, when asked why Joseph Smith became a Mason replied:

If ever a man was in need of sympathy and the friendship of good men, that man was Joseph Smith. It was under these circumstances (being charged with offences against civil law and perverting the word of God) that Joseph Smith became a member of the Masonic Fraternity. He hoped to find there the friendship and protection which he so much craved, but which had been denied him outside of a few devoted adherents (Ivins 124).

Whatever the actual circumstances surrounding the formation of the Masonic Lodge at Nauvoo, it is a documented fact that the event occurred for on October 15, 1841, Grand Master Abraham Jonas issued the following dispensation:

To all who shall see these presents—

Whereas it appears to me, from the position of sundry Brethren of Hancock County, in the State of Illinois, who are recommended and vouched to me, as worthy and fit Master Masons, by the Master, Wardens and Brethren of Columbus Lodge, No. 6, held at Columbus in said State, that the congregating of said petitioners, and others, who they may think proper to admit to their lodge (when organized) will tend to promote the welfare and usefulness of the craft, and

Whereas lodges of Masons in the recess of the Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois can be formed under its jurisdiction by special dispensation only. . .

Wherefore, I, Abraham Jonas, Grand Master of the said Grand Lodge of Illinois, do hereby, as Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois aforesaid, and according to the Constitutions of Ancient York Masons, grant this dispensation hereby authorizing and empowering our trusting and well beloved brother, George Miller, of said County of Hancock, to congregate a sufficient number of worthy brethren at some convenient place in the ‘City of Nauvoo’, in said Hancock County, and then and there, with convenient dispatch to form and open a lodge after the manner of Ancient Masons, and in pursuance of the petition aforesaid, I do hereby appoint our said

brother, George Miller, Esq., the first Master, John Parker to be the first Senior Warden, and Lucius Scovil to be the first Junior Warden of the Lodge of Masons aforesaid, and to be known by the name of Nauvoo Lodge under dispensation, and I do further authorize the said Master, Wardens and such Brethren as they may admit as members of said lodge, when duly formed and opened, to enter, pass, and raise to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, all such as may, by *all* the members of said lodge, deemed worthy, according to ancient custom, *and not otherwise* with the intent and view that the brethren who may be so congregated, entered, passed, and raised may in due time, be duly warranted for being and holding a regular lodge, for the further promoting of the Craft and increasing the number of Worthy Brethren; provided, however, that this Dispensation do continue and be in force, until the next annual session (1st Monday in October 1842) of the Grand Lodge aforesaid, *and no longer*.

Given under my hand and private seal, at Columbus, in the State of Illinois, on this 15th day of October, A.L. 5841, and A.D. 1841.

Signed Abraham Jonas, (SEAL)

G.M.G.L. of Illinois (Proceedings/Reprint 52)

On December 29, 1841, George Miller, the Worshipful Master named in the dispensation called a meeting which was held in the office of Hyrum Smith. At this meeting the dispensation was accepted and officers elected and appointed. The appointment of a committee to draft the by-laws of the lodge being the major concern of the meeting, the committee was appointed and the meeting adjourned until the following day. On the next day the lodge was opened in due form on the first degree (Hogan *Founding Minutes* 4). * * * NOTE: Two sets of minutes exist for this period. The original minutes as located with the Grand Lodge of Masons of the State of Illinois and minutes as found in the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City. Thanks to Mervin B. Hogan both sets of minutes have been transcribed to make them more accessible to all scholars. Hogan states that it is his opinion that two sets of minutes exist because “. . . there can be no question that Jonas directed Nauvoo Lodge to immediately secure a new minute book and rewrite the minutes to show that no petition was received by the Lodge prior to the March 17 meeting (Hogan *Official Minutes* 4). It is only after by-laws have been unanimously approved by the full membership of a Lodge that they are fully instituted and the lodge authorized to accept and act upon petitions. Yet, this and several other meetings were held to act upon candidates before the by-laws were approved.

At this first meeting a number of visitors from other lodges heard the reading of forty-one petitions for the degrees. Among those petitioning were Sidney Rigdon, Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt and Brigham Young, some of whom had been made Masons elsewhere but were not among the charter members of Nauvoo Lodge for one reason or another (*Hogan Official* 16). A resolution was adopted at this meeting that Grand Master Abraham Jonas be requested to preside at the installation ceremony to be held in the Spring of 1842. The resolution passed (*Hogan Official* 17). Between the time of this meeting and the acceptance of the by-laws, as recorded in the original minutes, and the installation of officers of Nauvoo Lodge, hundreds of petitions were received for affiliation and ballots cast on many petitions for the degrees. On February 17, 1841 the lodge passed a resolution to hold its installation on March 15, 1842. It was also resolved "that the First Presidency, and the Twelve Apostles, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and such others as they may invite, be requested to join in procession, and the public exercises of the day" (*Hogan Official* 19).

On March 15, 1842, at nine o'clock in the morning, Nauvoo Lodge held a special meeting with Grand Master Abraham Jonas presiding in the East. According to the minute book, the lodge opened on the third degree, adjourned to refreshment and was then called to labor at 3 p.m., at which time the Grand Marshal, John C. Bennett, was directed by the Grand Master to form a procession and to march to a nearby grove where the Lodge was duly instituted and its officers installed. The ceremony was followed by an address by the Grand Master, and at 7 p.m., Grand Master Jonas allowed by special dispensation, balloting on the petitions of Joseph Smith, Jr. and Sidney Rigdon, and ordered that if "the ballot was found clear to confer the three degrees as speedily as the nature of the case will admit." The lodge proceeded to process the petitions, the ballot was found clear and the first degree conferred, after which the meeting was adjourned until the next day when the second degree was conferred on Smith and Rigdon in the morning and the third degree in the afternoon (*Hogan Official* 21-23). It is interesting to note that many consider this action to be the first instance of "making a Mason at sight" to occur in Illinois. The Journal of Joseph Smith, under the date March 15, 1842, reads:

I officiated as Grand Chaplain at the installation of the Nauvoo Lodge of Freemasons at the Grove near the Temple. Grand Master Jonas, of Columbus, being present, a large number of people assembled for the occasion. The day was exceedingly fine; all things were done in order. In the evening I received the first degree in Freemasonry in Nauvoo Lodge, assembled in my general business office (qtd. in Turnbull 129).

The following day he wrote "I was with the Masonic and rose to the sublime degree."

It is interesting at this point to note that Joseph Smith later claimed that Freemasonry had been diverted from its original goals and designs and that he had been appointed of God to restore and lead "Masonry to the higher degrees" (Nibley *Egyptian* qtd. in England 75).

It is also of great interest that the Mormon Temple Ceremony which was adopted on May 4, 1842 (Stewart 158), just two months after Smith became a Master Mason, contains many rituals, symbols and ceremonies which had been associated with Freemasonry for generations (Gottlieb 216). A close reading of the Temple Ceremony, as it has been described by former Mormons, reveals that the symbolic bee-hive, the all-seeing-eye and the square and compasses with coinciding meanings are all present. The white leather apron and several identical signs and grips are also found. In 1965 Flanders inferred that Smith adopted the rituals of Freemasonry as the basis for the Temple Ceremony out of a great need to have a mystic or spiritual power by which to bind his people together (Flanders 248). This view coincides with the earlier quoted passages from Ivins and Hogan.

After its institution, Nauvoo Lodge held numerous meetings for a time, primarily to receive and act upon petitions. Many degrees were conferred. The extant minute book ends with the meeting of May 6, 1842. John Cook Bennett, who was soon to be excommunicated from the Church, was the Secretary. Obviously, the minute books either disappeared with Bennett, or minutes of the next few meetings were not taken for some reason. However, it is said that other minute books are in the possession of the Church in Salt Lake City, and even that a second version of the original minute book rests there. Mervin Hogan, a Mormon scholar and also a Mason, has given us written versions of these minutes as noted in the bibliography.

On May 2, 1842, Bodley Lodge received a note from the lodge at Nauvoo inviting them to join in a celebration of St. John's day on June 24th. The secretary of Bodley Lodge was directed to send back a note declining the invitation because of the great distance and poor financial condition of the lodge. The secretary also said in his letter that:

Bodley Lodge regrets that anything extraneous from pure Masonry should be coupled with this communication, it having been throughout all ages, the peculiar characteristic of Masonry, that she has sent forth her pure flame of living light before the world, uncontaminated by political doings, and untinged by religious distinctions (qtd. in Turnbull 129).

The month of May, 1842, was a critical one for the lodge, for Joseph Smith, and for his followers. It was a confusing time as the Church dealt with the expulsion of John Cook Bennett, one who had risen rapidly and quite publicly to the highest ranks in the Church only to be found unworthy of the calling (Morcombe 450). It was a frustrating time as Bennett began to reveal the secrets of the Church and the personal secrets of its highest leaders. As he spoke, Bennett exaggerated and embellished the faults he found and vilified everyone he could. It was a time when enemies of the Church were waiting for reasons to incite the people, and it was a time when the "gentile" population first heard of the avenging angels, or Danites, and immediately connected the shooting of Governor Boggs of Missouri to an "angel" and to "blood atonement." Hadn't Boggs been instrumental in forcing the Mormons to leave Missouri (Gottlieb 39)? It is more likely, however, that the shooting was a result of the extremely heated political campaign that occurred in Missouri that year.

Still other rumors were rife during the late Spring of 1842, not the least of which was the caught whisper that many highly placed Mormon leaders were engaging in secret polygamous marriages. John Cook Bennett, in his exposés, shouted to the world that the rumors were true. Other investigations soon made clear to a population already biased, that several of the rumors were based on fact. And, once proof was offered that as early as July 12, 1841 Joseph Smith had proclaimed to a select few of the Church hierarchy the reception of a divine revelation that God not only approved plural marriages, but that he commanded them (Flanders 268; also

Hansen *Experience* 155-157) no amount of protestations of innocence could have changed the situation in Hancock County. Mormonism's base in Illinois was finished. Though adequate evidence exists that many Church members had more than one wife and, indeed, that Smith himself engaged in a number of plural marriages (with both single and married women), the Prophet denied it for the remainder of his life (Hansen *Experience* 157). Fawn Brodie, in her well researched and able biography of Joseph Smith, titled *No Man Knows My History* (1971 ed., 434-465), lists forty-eight plural wives of Joseph Smith and appends much supporting evidence. Even then, there is ample indication that the number of wives was much larger. An interesting side note is that the widow of the man, William Morgan, whose disappearance in New York had caused the anti-Masonic clamor of the 1830's, later became the plural wife of both George W. Harris and Joseph Smith (Brodie 436).

As can be seen, the rumors of the day were many and they were very emotional. Tales of attempted murder by Mormon death squads and the belief in what was perceived of as wholesale, Church approved adultery and bigamy would understandably cause many men to be uneasy. Such was the case with the Masons of Bodley Lodge No. 1 of Quincy, who on July 16, 1842 held a special meeting to consider charges against Nauvoo Lodge U.D.

Whereas, it has come to the knowledge of Bodley Lodge, No. 1, Quincy, from sources of information which cannot be doubted, that Nauvoo Lodge U.D. have, since the granting of their dispensation, conducted in a manner unMasonic, and highly dangerous and injurious to our beloved institution, to subvert and destroy the great, good, and beneficial influence of Masonic principles; therefore

Resolved, That the Grand Master of this State, be requested and is hereby requested, to suspend the authority which has been granted the Nauvoo Lodge by the Grand Master of this State, without delay, and continue said suspension until the Grand Lodge of this State shall take the subject of said charges into consideration and dispose of the same in such manner as they shall deem essential to the ends of justice, and the welfare and prosperity of the institution of Masonry (qtd. in Turnbull 129; also, Morcombe 449).

A second resolution, also passed by Bodley Lodge read:

Resolved, That Bodley Lodge No. 1 of Quincy, request of the Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois, that a committee be appointed at

the next meeting of said Lodge to make inquiry into the manner the officers of Nauvoo Lodge U.D., were installed by the Grand Master of this State, and by what authority the Grand Master initiated, passed and raised Messers Smith and Rigdon to the degree of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, at one and the same time, and that the proceedings of the committee be reported for the benefit of this Lodge (qtd. in Turnbull 129).

These resolutions adopted by Bodley Lodge No. 1 bore fruit, for the Grand Master suspended work under the dispensation issued to Nauvoo Lodge on August 11, 1842 (Morcombe 450).

In the next few months, investigation revealed the startling fact that Nauvoo Lodge would soon be the largest Lodge in the area, and perhaps, the largest in the State of Illinois. That Nauvoo Lodge could receive 345 petitions between March 15, 1842 and August 11, 1842 was a surprise in itself, but that they conferred 286 Entered Apprentice Degrees, and that 243 of these progressed to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in just six months was unbelievable (Hogan *Vital* 15-16). The total membership of all other Masonic Lodges in Illinois at the time was approximately 227. Non-Mormon Masons soon began to suggest that Nauvoo's stupendous growth could not be possible if the By-Laws of the Grand Lodge were being followed.

The Grand Lodge session of 1842 was opened by Grand Master Abraham Jonas on October 3, 1842 at Jacksonville, Illinois. Nauvoo Lodge, U.D. was represented by H. Sherwood and L. N. Scoville (*G.L. Proceedings Reprint* 27). The Grand Master reported that he had, after the 1841 Grand Lodge session had been closed, issued a dispensation for the formation of a Lodge in the City of Nauvoo. He noted that he had received a number of letters relating to the dispensation and had referred all questions to the Committee on Returns and the Work of Lodges (Temple 104-106). Brother Jonas announced that he had also received a communication from Bodley Lodge No. 1, Quincy, Illinois offering objections to the operations of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D. and that this communication had also been referred to Committee.

The next morning, October 4, 1842, Helm was elected and installed as Grand Master of Illinois Masons. Soon thereafter, the following report came from the Committee on Returns and Work of Lodges:

The majority of the Committee on Returns and Work of Lodges, ask leave to report that they have examined the return of Nauvoo Lodge, under dispensation, together with the papers and correspondence referred to your committee connected therewith; your committee regret that the original records of said Lodge have not been sent up as was required by the M.W.G. Master in his order suspending the labor of said Lodge; but from the report as well as the transcript of the proceedings of the Lodge, exhibited, the work appears to conform to the requirements of this Grand Lodge. It appears, however, from documentary and other evidence before the committee, that there is some reason to fear that the intention and ancient landmarks of our institution have been departed from to an inexcusable extent. The facts in the case, however, your committee are of opinion can only be satisfactorily ascertained by a careful inspection of the original records, and through investigation of the whole proceeding. Such a course your committee believe is due as well to the brethren of Nauvoo Lodge as to this Grand Lodge, and the Craft generally; and should our fears prove groundless, as the committee still hope they will, none will be more benefitted by true investigation than the Lodge under consideration; but should they in any considerable degree be realized, the sooner the facts are ascertained the better.

It appears from the records that the dispensation was granted October 15th, 5841, and the Lodge installed and set to work on the 15th of March, A.L. 5842, by the M.W.G. Master. Up to the 11th August, at which time their labor was suspended, the Lodge initiated 286 candidates, and passed and raised nearly as many.

In view of all the circumstances connected with this subject, the committee would respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. RESOLVED, That the injunction suspending the labors of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., be continued until the next regular communication of this Grand Lodge.
2. RESOLVED, That a special committee be appointed, whose duty it shall be to examine the original minutes of Nauvoo Lodge, and diligently inquire into any irregularity or misconduct alleged to have been committed by said Lodge, and report the facts at the next regular communication of Grand Lodge.

J. N. RALSTON, Committee

M. HELM (G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 30-34)

The minority of the Committee on Return and Work of Lodges made the following report in relation to Nauvoo Lodge:

The minority of the Committee on Return and Works of Lodges would respectfully state that they have examined the return of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., together with all the papers referred to them on the

subject of the said Lodge, as well as other testimony that has come before them, and would respectfully say, that, to the minority of the committee, there appear no evidence by which the committee can establish any irregularity or departure from the original landmarks of the order, but having reasons to apprehend that irregularity can be established, we would respectfully concur with the majority in recommending the adoption of the resolution the majority have reported. All of which is respectfully submitted,

H. PRATHER (G.L. *Proceedings/Reprint 35*)

Brother P.G.M. offered a substitute to the above resolutions, as follows:

RESOLVED, That a special committee be appointed, whose duty it shall be to repair to Nauvoo forthwith, and examine the original minutes of Nauvoo Lodge, and diligently inquire into any irregularity or misconduct alleged to have been committed by said Lodge, and to examine persons and papers connected with the subject, and report the facts to the M.W.G. Master; and if he shall deem them of such character as to justify such a course, he shall either direct the injunction suspending the work of said Lodge, to be continued until the next regular communication, or direct the dispensation granted by Grand Master Jonas to be continued, and the Lodge permitted to work under the same until the next Grand Annual Communication of this Grand Lodge; and that said committee be allowed a reasonable compensation for their expenses (G.L. *Proceedings/Reprint 35*).

which was concurred in, and the report and resolution as amended was laid on the table for the present.

The M.G.M. announced that petitions were in order. There being none, Reports of Committees were in order.

The Committee on Return and Work of Lodges made the following report, accompanied with a resolution, which, on motion was adopted:

The Committee on Returns and Work of Lodges, respectfully report that they have considered the case of Peoria Lodge, U.D., whose delegate, Bro. Davis, is here without the returns of his Lodge, they having been unavoidably left behind under peculiar circumstances, already detailed to the Grand Lodge by the explanatory statement of Bro. Davis, and now recommend the adoption of the following resolution.

RESOLVED, That the Peoria Lodge, U.D., be required to hand in, as soon as practicable, the returns and minutes of their proceedings to the

G.M., for his inspection; and that if he shall approve the same, a charter shall then be granted to said Lodge, upon their paying to the Grand Secretary their proper amount of dues and charges.

M. HELM, Committee
J. N. RALSTON,
H. PRATHER
(*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 35*)

On October 5, 1842, the Grand Secretary read a petition requesting dispensation to form Rising Star Lodge No. 12 in Iowa Territory. The Lodge was composed of Mormon members. The request was granted (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 37*). In the evening session of the same day, the report of the Committee on the Return and Work of Lodges was called up and two resolutions passed. One provided that the Committee's Report be published in the Grand Lodge Proceedings and the other that all papers regarding the controversy about Nauvoo Lodge be referred to the Committee on Returns and Work. Later that same evening the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, That should the Grand Master deem it his duty after receiving the report of the Nauvoo Committee, to continue the dispensation of Nauvoo Lodge, it shall be the duty of said Lodge to pay the balance of their Lodge dues, before they are permitted to proceed with work.

RESOLVED, That the Grand Master draw on the Treasurer to pay the expenses of the Nauvoo Committee, and Brother Secretary's expenses in visiting the Grand Lodge of Missouri (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 41*).

Some time after the Grand Lodge session, the special committee made the following report to the Grand Master who gave the appended Order:

To the M. W. Meredith Helm, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois:

The committee appointed to proceed to Nauvoo and investigate the charges of irregularity, which had been preferred against Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., have performed that duty, and beg leave respectfully to report that, after a careful and laborious examination of both persons and papers they have with due deference, concluded to submit the following suggestions and resolution:

The principal charges which have been made against the Lodge your committee found groundless, and without proof to sustain them. Irregularities have obtained in the work of the Lodge which, your committee think, strike at once at the vital principles of our order, and the commission of which should not be passed over in silence.

First, the practice of balloting for more than one applicant at one and the same time.

The privilege of balloting for or against an applicant, your committee think one of the inalienable rights of our time honored institution. The Lodge has no right to introduce within its walls any applicant who may be obnoxious to any one of its members. Neither has it the right to inquire into the motive which actuated or influenced the ballot of any member.

Should a member (forgetful of the Masonic principles so often inculcated within our sacred walls) reject a worthy applicant out of private pique or malice, the wrong is his own, and to his God alone is he accountable. And far better is it, in the estimation of your committee that worthy applicant should be rejected time and again, than that the sacredness of the ballot box should be invaded.

2d. On one occasion an applicant of at least doubtful character was received on a promise of reformation and restitution, with the view of holding his future conduct in check, and making him a worthier and a better man. In this instance, the motive your committee do not doubt was good, but whilst they applaud the motive they must condemn the practice as one fraught with too much danger to the craft ever to be indulged in. In view of the whole subject, your committee find much to regret, much to deplore. Yet they cannot bring themselves to believe that the good of the fraternity requires that the injunction should be perpetual; but, on the contrary, that justice should be tempered with mercy, and therefore beg leave to submit the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the dispensation of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D. be continued until the next annual communication of the Grand Lodge of Illinois; and should the M.W. Grand Master approve of our suggestions, that some brother be appointed to attend at some given time to remind the brethren of the irregularity of their proceedings, and admonish them in the most friendly manner to avoid all such in the future.'

All of which is respectfully submitted by the committee.

JONATHAN NYE,
Committee
W. B. WARREN,
(*Reprint G.L. Proceedings 45-46*)

Order of the M.W. Grand Master Helm

WHEREAS, The Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois, at its late Annual Communication, appointed a committee to repair to Nauvoo, and there, by examination of persons and papers, diligently to enquire into certain alleged irregularities or misconduct of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., and, whereas, the said committee having discharged the duty assigned them, have reported to me that the principle charges against said Lodge are entirely groundless, and that certain irregularities in the work of said Lodge, which have been practiced in some instances, proceeded, in the opinion of the committee, from error of judgment rather than of intention; and whereas, the said committee, after a full, patient and laborious investigation of the case, and in view of all the facts before them in connection therewith, have unanimously recommended that the legal existence of said Lodge be continued; and whereas, the high moral character, general intelligence and extensive Masonic information and experience of the brethren composing said committee, entitle their opinion and recommendation to enter my entire confidence, and should remove from the minds of all any fears that may have been entertained respecting the motives and designs of Nauvoo Lodge.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MEREDITH HELM, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois, by virtue of the authority invested in me, do hereby order and adjudge, that the injunction suspending the work of Nauvoo Lodge, be removed; that the dispensation granted to it by our late Grand Master, A. Jonas, be continued, and that the said Lodge be, and hereby is authorized and empowered to resume work under said dispensation as a regular Lodge and carefully avoiding the mistakes heretofore committed, and adhering to the ancient land-marks of the order with the most scrupulous accuracy, to continue in operation till the next regular communication of the Grand Lodge, to be held on the first Monday of October next, at Jacksonville, Illinois, when and where said Lodge is hereby required to appear by its legal representatives, with a copy of its proceedings under the authority herein contained.
the said dispensation

Given under my hand and seal, at Springfield, this 2d day of November, A.D., 1842; A.L. 5842.

(SEAL)

MEREDITH HELM, G.M.G.L.S.I.
(G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 46-47)

Nauvoo Lodge, U.D. filed only one Grand Lodge return, for the year 1842, which was reproduced by Brother Morcombe in an article in *The New Age Magazine* as follows:

Return of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D. Held at Nauvoo on the first and third

Thursdays in each month:

George Miller, W.M. [Bishop of the Church.]

Hyrum Smith, S.W. [Brother of Joseph Smith Patriarch.]

Lucius Scovil, J.W. [Of frequent prominent mention in Church history.]

William Clayton, Secretary. [Clerk to Joseph Smith.]

Newel K. Whitney, Treasurer. [Bishop of the Church.]

Charles Allen, S.D.

Heber C. Kimball, J.D. [Elder-One of the Twelve.]

Wm. Felshaw, Steward.

Hyrum Clark, Steward. [High Priest, ect.]

Samuel Ralfe, Tyler. [Priest and Counselor.]

Past Masters—Asahel Perry, Daniel S. Miles, Hezekiah Peck.

Master Masons 243

Fellowcrafts 4

Entered Apprentices 9

Dead:

Vinson Knight, M.M., on the 31st day of July, 1842; E.P.

Merriam, M.M., on the 14th day of September, 1842.

Rejected:

Daniel Avery, 44 years of age, 5 feet 11 inches high; a stout, athletic man; dark complexion; hair partially gray; nose of the aquiline form; slow-spoken; a farmer; resides in Nauvoo; June 16, 1842.

Hiram Dayton, 44 years of age; occupation, a farmer; 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high; thick set; light complexion; light hair; blue eyes; quick-spoken and not plain; resides in Nauvoo; on the 7th day of July, 1842.

Nathan A. West, 34 years of age; 6 feet high; well proportioned; round shoulders; brown hair; blue eyes; dark complexion; moderate speech; thin face; occupation, a carpenter and joiner; resides in Nauvoo; on the seventh day of July, 1842.

Samuel Brown, 41 years of age; 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high; light complexion; blue eyes; black hair; by trade a boot and shoe maker; resides in Nauvoo; on the 21st day of July 1842.

Expelled:

John C. Bennett, M.M., about 38 years of age; 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high; dark complexion; dark eyes; Roman nose; lost his upper front teeth; quick-spoken; good language; by profession a physician; residing in New York; for gross un-Masonic conduct.

Initiated: 285

(Morcombe 451-452)

In less than a year, Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., had grown to over 300 members, which membership exceeded that of all other Lodges in the State combined. In light of such growth Grand Master Helm, in

early 1843, issued dispensations to form two new Lodges in Nauvoo. One was called Nye Lodge, U.D., and the other Helm Lodge, U.D. A third predominantly Mormon Lodge, Eagle Lodge of Keokuk, Iowa, also operated under an Illinois dispensation (Morcombe 458). Such phenomenal growth, unheard of in any other Lodge, not only surprised, but also frightened the non-Mormon Masons not only of Hancock County but throughout the State as a whole. It should not be surprising, therefore, that on September 29, 1843, Bodley Lodge No. 1 adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That we respectfully ask the attention of the members of the Grand Lodge and Delegates to carefully examine into and consider well on the propriety of granting a charter to Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., and that it is our decided conviction that said dispensation should never have been granted, and from what we have seen and heard from sources to be relied on, that it would be unwise to grant a charter or continue the dispensation longer among that people (*Minutes of Bodley Lodge*).

On the same date a second resolution was also adopted by Bodley Lodge instructing the delegates of that Lodge to vote against the issuance of a charter to Nauvoo Lodge and to seek a withdrawal of all dispensations then granted to Nauvoo Lodge.

The 1843 Grand Lodge session met on October 2, 1843, at Jacksonville, Illinois, with Meredith Helm presiding as Grand Master. At the start of the session the Grand Master read a message in which the following was stated:

The committee appointed by you to visit Nauvoo for the purpose of inquiring into certain irregularities alleged to have been committed by the Lodge there, after discharging the duty assigned to them, made a report to me, concluding with a recommendation that their dispensation be continued. Accordingly, in compliance with what appeared to me, under these circumstances, to be the wish of the Grand Lodge, as implied in the resolution appointing said committee, I restored to them their dispensation. The authority therein granted now ceases, and the whole matter is again before the Grand Lodge, upon their application for a charter. Should you finally determine to grant a charter to Nauvoo Lodge, and thus perpetuate its existence, I would suggest the propriety, nay, the necessity of dividing it into at least four, if not more, distinct Lodges. The number of its members is entirely too large for convenience in working, and is otherwise objectionable; a fact of which they are themselves aware. A short time ago they applied to me to divide them into several distinct Lodges; but as this application was made at a period very near to our annual meeting, I thought it

proper to wait and refer the whole matter, as I now do, to the Grand Lodge (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint* 49-50).

That evening, the Committee on Returns and Work reported as follows:

Your committee have examined the abstract returns of Rising Sun Lodge No. 12; Nauvoo Lodge, U.D.; Nye Lodge, U.D.; and Helm Lodge, U.D.; but are unable to report thereupon without further explanation or amendment of the returns (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint* 52).

The abstracted returns, however, were commented upon as follows:

That they have examined the abstract returns from Rising Sun Lodge, No. 12, from which it appears that the work has been irregular, and the return is altogether informal, and dues unpaid.

That they have examined the abstract return of Nauvoo Lodge, U.D., and they find the work in some measure correct, but in many instances there appears irregularities and matters to your committee inexplicable. The Lodge has failed to bring their record before the committee, which to some of your committee at least, is a matter of surprise, knowing, as they do, the severe lesson the said Lodge was taught at the last Grand Communication. The greatest irregularity of which your committee would complain is, there appears a disposition to accumulate and gather members without regard to character, and to push them on through the second and third degrees, before they can possibly become skilled in the first or second. Your committee are aware that there is no by-law of this Grand Lodge to prevent this; nor are they sure that any length of probation would in all cases insure skill, but they feel certain that the ancient land-marks of the order require that the Lodge should know that the candidate is well skilled in one degree before he is advanced to another. Our committee will not doubt but that there are many worthy and skillful brethren in Nauvoo Lodge, brethren who would in other circumstances be an ornament to the institution of Masonry, but they are assured that their influence is entirely lost and obscured by the conduct of others less worthy; nay, of those who entirely disregard the ties that should bind us together as a sacred band of friends and brothers.

Your committee have also had under consideration the abstract returns of Helm Lodge, U.D., and find their work irregular in receiving and acting on four petitions in one day; and improvident in passing and raising to the Third Degree, oftentimes within two days

after initiation, as appears from the abstract alone, for no records have been presented, and dues in part unpaid.

The records of Nye Lodge, U.D., are objectionable in the same points that those of Helm Lodge are, viz.: In receiving petitions on one day, and initiating on the next, in as many as six instances. And also in pushing the candidate through the second and third Degree before he can possibly be skilled in the preceding degree. The dues appear to be paid.

Your committee have been at a great loss to know what course to recommend in relation to the above Lodges; and also to Keokuk Lodge, U.D., heretofore reported, but on which there was no action.

That their work is highly censurable, there is no doubt in the minds of your committee; but whether that censure should extend so far as to arrest their charter, or suspend their dispensation, is a matter of which your committee would gladly be relieved. Were this all, your committee would be inclined to the side of mercy; but from fact that have been communicated to your committee through various channels, and particularly through Masons of eminence who have visited the Lodge at Nauvoo, your committee have good reason to believe that they put on their best dress when they appear before this Grand Lodge.

Your committee will offer the following resolutions:

RESOLVED, That the charter of Rising Sun Lodge No. 12 be suspended, and that the Master and Wardens be cited to appear at the next Grand Annual Communication of this Grand Lodge, to show cause, if any they have, why their charter should not be revoked.

RESOLVED, That, in the opinion of this Grand Lodge, it is expedient and prejudicial to the interests of Free Masonry longer to sustain a Lodge in Nauvoo, and for the disrespect and contempt that Nauvoo Lodge and Helm Lodge have shown in refusing to present the records of their work to this Grand Lodge.

RESOLVED, That, their dispensations be and they are hereby revoked, and charters refused.

RESOLVED, That, for irregular work and disregard of the resolutions and instructions of this Grand Lodge, the dispensations of Keokuk Lodge and Nye Lodge are hereby revoked and charters refused (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 58-59*).

The year 1844 was a critical one for the Mormons of Nauvoo. On several occasions Joseph Smith had stated that he planned to have Nauvoo declared a Federal District or a separate state so that it could be free from the laws of the State of Illinois. On January 29, 1844, Joseph Smith called a meeting of the Twelve Apostles of the Church in which it was unanimously proposed that Joseph Smith be a

candidate for the office of President of the United States. A toast was drunk in the Nauvoo Mansion stating, "May Nauvoo become the empire seat of government" (Flanders 278). On February 7, 1844, the candidacy of Joseph Smith for President of the United States was formally announced.

On April 1, 1844, Bodley Lodge No. 1 of Quincy took the following action:

The W.M. remarked that the Nauvoo Lodges were working and finishing their hall, notwithstanding their dispensations had been withdrawn by the Grand Lodge.

Bro. Freeman was called upon and stated that he had learned that the Nauvoo Lodges were still at work, receiving, passing and raising Masons, and that the brethren of Warsaw Lodge had notified the Grand Officers on the subject.

On motion of Bro. Stahl:

RESOLVED, That the Secretary be instructed to inform the Grand Master of State that Nauvoo, Keokuk, and the other Lodges in and about Nauvoo continue to work, and they have given notice in public papers of their intention to consecrate their Masonic Hall on the 5th inst., and that the said Masons pretend not to be in possession of official notice that they were deprived of their charter of dispensations (Minutes, April 1, 1844).

The *Nauvoo Neighbor* in its issues published between March 13 and April 5, 1844, had the following announcement:

MASONIC NOTICE.

The Officers and brethren of Nauvoo Lodge would hereby make known to the Masonic world that they have fixed on Friday the 5th day of April, for the dedication of their Masonic Hall, to take place at 1 o'clock P.M. All worthy brethren of the fraternity who feel interested in the cause, are requested to participate with us in the ceremonies of dedication. Done by order of the Lodge, Wm. Clayton, Secretary, March 13th, 1844.

In the *History of the Church* Joseph Smith said that he attended the ceremonies, that about 550 Masons from various parts of the world were present and took part in a procession that was formed, accompanied by the Nauvoo brass band, that the exercises were in charge of Hyrum Smith, Worshipful Master, that the principal address of the occasion was delivered by Apostle Erastus Snow, that he, Joseph Smith, and Dr. Goforth also addressed the assembly, and

all visiting Masons were given dinner in the Masonic Hall at the expense of Nauvoo Lodge (qtd. in Turnbull 132).

A member of St. Clair Lodge No. 24 attended the dedication. Upon this being reported to his home Lodge, charges were filed against him for "holding Masonic communication with clandestine Masons." This member stated in a letter "with the Masons of Nauvoo I associated in procession (not in work), and attended their dedication ceremonies of the Masonic Hall of Nauvoo as a Mason" (Reynolds 117). The committee reporting on the matter stated:

The committee do not wish to indulge in mere conjecture, but it does seem that Bro. _____ was determined to participate in the Nauvoo display, though he should do it in contravention of the usages of Masonry, if so he could not escape the expressed condemnation of the Order. We think it is evident from the fact that he stated to several before he left Belleville that he proposed going to Nauvoo to participate in the dedication of the Masonic Hall erected there, and also from the fact that he took his Masonic regalia with him for the occasion. Your committee are aware that no good would be answered by inflicting punishment upon an individual who had acted innocently or ignorantly in the premises, yet where there is a flagrant violation of the principles of the institution, it should be met with rigor and severity. We feel, from the facts which have been stated, that Bro. _____ acted knowingly in the case, and most willfully violated Ancient Masonic usage. In view of the above your committee feel it their duty to offer the following resolutions:

1st RESOLVED, That Bro. _____, by participating with the Nauvoo Lodge, in procession &c., treated the authorities of the G.Lodge with contempt and violated an ancient established principle of the Fraternity,

2nd RESOLVED, That as Bro. _____ has acted unmasonically as is shown, by the above report, and expressed in the resolution preceeding this, the Lodge deal with him according to Masonic usages in the Fraternity.

Dated June 14, 1844

C. B. Y. Taylor
G. W. Hook
J. Mace

(Turnbull 133)

The sentence as passed, was then carried into execution. But serious internal trouble had been brewing in Nauvoo among the members of the Mormon Church, some of whom were deeply concerned with the statements and actions of Joseph Smith himself. One William Law, a wealthy and able printer, had come to Nauvoo

from Canada to invest in the growing business enterprises growing up around that startling village. He soon became Second Councilor to Joseph Smith and for two years served in a capacity where Smith's every move was known and noted (Hill 388). As time went by, Law began to grow disillusioned with what he perceived as the political machinations of Joseph Smith (Hill 388). Law challenged Smith privately about the misuse of Church funds and charged that Smith was too involved in politics to be following God's desires (Stewart 216-217 and Taylor 221). When Smith seemed not to listen, Law made his charges publicly. He also charged the Prophet with being involved in too many business speculations, many of which were exploitive of his own followers. Yet, the charge which overshadowed all other charges was the charge that Joseph Smith was secretly advocating the practice of plural wives for a select few among the hierarchy of the Church and that Smith had actually made an advance to William Law's own wife (Hill 389). Upon the publication of William Law's charges, many others within the Church began to criticize their Prophet (Hill 389). Often they charged him with becoming a fallen prophet and prayed that he would come to his senses and return to his earlier ways. In response to Law's charges, Smith called him a Judas and demanded his excommunication (Hill 391). The schism was small, but to Smith it was dangerous, because many of the men who gravitated to William Law's cause were able men from within the hierarchy of the Church. Soon the dissenters were calling for the repeal of Nauvoo's special charter and began to purchase and plan printed opposition to Smith by setting up a rival newspaper (Hill 391-392). While waiting for the press to arrive, the group was able to have Joseph Smith indicted by the civil court for adultery and polygamy (Hill 392).

With the arrival of the printing press, Law and several others, immediately set to work. The first issue of the new paper was planned and published under the title *The Nauvoo Expositor*. Only that one issue, of June 7, was published, for upon reading Law's charges that Joseph Smith abused the power of the Church and that he wanted to unite the Church and with the powers of civil government for his own political machinations and financial reward, the hierarchy was incensed. Yet, it was probably the charges about polygamy that caused Smith to call the City Council to order to discuss what could be done (Pease 351). The decision was a quick

one, for all agreed that the new press was a nuisance and that it should be abated (Hill 394). Under Joseph Smith's direction, John P. Marshal and his men, repaired to the office of *The Nauvoo Expositor* and destroyed the printing press and all existing copies of the only issue it had printed. The printing type was scattered in the streets for the people to trample upon (Hill 394-395). Such violence quite certainly caused the owners of the wrecked press to fear for their lives as they quickly fled Nauvoo and went either to Warsaw or to Carthage to report what had happened. The national, as well as local, newspapers reported the story in detail and an editorial in the *Warsaw Signal* called for war and the extermination of all Mormons (Smith, *History* Vol VI 500). The matter was quickly brought before the criminal court where formal charges were filed against Joseph Smith and his associates, holding them responsible for what had taken place (Pease 352). The tension that existed in Hancock County was extreme, and for a short while it appeared that an armed conflict would take place between the Mormons and the rest of the community. Smith ordered the citizens of Nauvoo to defend their city, the Legion to dig trenches and to manufacture artillery and called for missionaries to procure arms and to come home (Hill 398). However, Governor Ford interceded and convinced those charged with the illegal acts to surrender themselves to the civil authorities. Later, Ford seems to have pinpointed what time bears out as the cause of the outrage against the Mormons and that was the fact that since almost all Mormons voted as a bloc, the outnumbered non-Mormons in Hancock County were effectively prevented from sharing the governmental power to which they had grown accustomed. Polygamy, religion and Freemasonry were simply excuses used in an attempt to regain power (Ford 324-329). Ironically, Ford, himself, seems to have been as involved as anyone. After promises of safety for himself and especially for his people, Smith and his brother, Hyrum, surrendered and were imprisoned in the jail at Carthage, Illinois, where they were held for treason and for levying war against the State. Yet, Smith was not to live to be tried for the offenses for which he was charged (Hill 403).

On June 27, 1844, a group of men with faces blackened, variously estimated to be from fifty to one hundred in number, stormed the jail in Carthage and killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith (Flanders 306). To paraphrase one modern writer's summary of eye witness accounts:

Joseph . . . attempted to jump from the window some twenty-five feet into the courtyard below. As he started through the window, he was hit by two shots from behind and one from the courtyard below. Some reports state that as he fell outward he cried, "My Lord, My God." According to other witnesses the assailants crowded around Joseph's body which they propped up against a curb well and riddled with shot (Lundwall 226-322).

The assault lasted no more than three minutes, but its effects have been felt continuously since that time. Mormon Churchmen soon held Joseph Smith up as a martyr noting that in his *Doctrine and Covenants* he had written, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter . . . I shall die innocent, and it shall be said of me . . . he was murdered in blood" (Lundwall 149). At a time when many Churches would have withered and died, this seemingly fulfilled prophecy strengthened and unified the majority of the Mormon flock.

Although numerous accounts have been written about the killing and many men publicly accused, written eyewitness accounts contain too much speculation or conflict dramatically with other accounts as to what really happened to allow an accurate conclusion to be drawn. Several accounts make note of what prominent families were present in the mob. Others point out that many men known to have belonged to non-Mormon Masonic Lodges were present that day. That such was undoubtedly the case has been disputed by very few historians; however, at the time of the killings, both the Masonic leadership as well as the Mormon hierarchy realized that there was no reason to believe, and no discernable evidence to support even the slightest suspicion that the Masonic Fraternity itself was involved in the murders. The Church leadership, it is sure, knew that individuals holding Masonic membership were present at the murder scene, yet it seems that they believed that the fact that a scoundrel holds membership in a specific group should not indict the group as a whole. Yet, despite the Church's public statements at the time of the incident, a few historians, removed by time from the event have never-the-less leveled reckless charges against the Fraternity. Mervin B. Hogan, Mormon scholar and Freemason, helps to nullify such statements by observing, "Mormons also knew and realized the vital distinction between individual Masons acting solely on their own initiative and the fact that the Masonic Order had in no sense participated as an organization (Hogan "What if" 13). The Grand

Jury of Hancock County met in October of 1844 to consider the killings of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. The names of sixty persons thought to have been involved were placed before the panel (Hill 427). Indictments were brought against nine persons; three said to have been wounded by Joseph Smith's pistol, for the prisoners had not been disarmed when jailed. Four of the nine escaped arrest. Of the men charged, Mark Aldrich is of special interest, for he had been a member of the Masonic fraternity for over twenty years and held a high reputation in the community. It is also of note that three of the remaining defendants, Jacob C. Davis, Thomas Coke Sharp and Levi Williams, filed petitions with Warsaw Lodge No. 21, in Warsaw, Illinois while under indictment (Hogan *Lynching* 15). The minutes of the Lodge show that the pending indictments were discussed by the Lodge, but that since the three had not been convicted, there was nothing to do but to proceed as if they were innocent (Hogan *Lynching* 15). This is a presumption made by law, both civil and Masonic, however, it is no wonder that Brigham Young issued an order of silence about Freemasonry upon his people, for the Lodge involved could have held off on the petitions and the Grand Lodge could have acted more speedily to reprimand them for not doing so. However, it is also apparent that judgement was clouded by an emotional atmosphere in Hancock County where the three were considered as victims of persecution by Lodge members, who although not participants in the killings, felt that the Prophet's death was a positive occurrence. The ballot was spread and the three men were elected to receive the degrees. The Lodge also noted that Mark Aldrich, a member of their Lodge, was also a defendant in the murder case (Minutes of Bodley Lodge). The action of the Lodge at this late date, removed by time and emotion from the actual events, suggests that it would have been better for Warsaw Lodge to have postponed any action on the petitions until after the case had reached its conclusion. Yet, emotion and prevailing attitudes were part of the events which took place in 1844 and the members of Warsaw Lodge cannot be expected to have ignored the prevailing feelings of the day any more than the patriots of the American Revolution could have been expected to ignore the happenings at Bunker Hill during the War for Independence.

On October 10, 1844, the following resolution was offered to the Grand Lodge then in session:

WHEREAS, The M.W. Grand Lodge of Illinois, at their last Communication, thought proper to withdraw from Nauvoo, Helm, and Nye Lodges the dispensation which had been granted to them, for gross unMasonic conduct; whereas, the M.W. Grand Master did, during vacation, send a special messenger to Nauvoo and demand the dispensation aforesaid, which demand was treated with contempt, and not only a positive refusal given by said Lodge, but a determination to continue their work.

RESOLVED, By this Grand Lodge, that all fellowship with said Lodges, and the members thereof, be withdrawn, and the Association of Masons working these Lodges are hereby declared clandestine; and all the members hailing therefrom, suspended from all the privileges of Masonry within the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge; and that our sister Lodges be requested to deny them the same privileges.

RESOLVED, That the Grand Secretary be directed to address a circular on the subject to all the Grand Lodges in correspondence with this Grand Lodge; and request the same to be published in all the Masonic periodicals (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 73*).

On the morning of October 6, 1845, while the Grand Lodge was in session, the Grand Master reported as follows:

One other matter I will lay before the Grand Lodge: At the last Grand Communication, a Committee was appointed, at the suggestion of the Committee on Petitions and Grievances, to repair to Keokuk and make certain investigations, and report to the Grand Master. Bro. Montague, of Warsaw, and two others, were appointed. Sometime after, Bro. Montague informed me that it was not convenient for the two to act, and requested me to appoint others; I named him to several Brothers in that neighborhood, and authorized him to select and appoint two to act with him, and report to me. I do not know what his action has been; I submit the foregoing for the action of the Grand Lodge (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 76*).

On the morning of the 8th of October, 1845, the following resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS, It is reported that Warsaw Lodge, No. 21, did not initiate, pass, or raise to the sublime degree of Master Mason a person or persons under indictment for crime at the time they were so initiated, passed and raised; therefore,

RESOLVED, That the Committee on Returns and Work of Lodges under Charter be instructed to examine into the matter, and report to this Grand Lodge during this Communication (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 88*).

On the morning of October 9, 1845, the following report was made and the appended resolution adopted:

The Committee on Returns and Work of Lodges under Charter, to whom was referred the resolution in relation to Warsaw Lodge No. 21, have had the same under consideration, and beg leave to report, that as Warsaw Lodge has failed to make her regular returns to this Grand Lodge, the committee are unable to get positive information on the subject, and ask leave to offer the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That all Lodges under this jurisdiction that have failed to make their annual report by the next Annual Communication of this Grand Lodge, they shall be deemed to have forfeited their charters; and that the Grand Secretary is hereby ordered, in each case of such failure, to demand the same, together with all furniture, books and papers belonging to said Lodges.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

The following resolution was immediately presented and passed:

RESOLVED, That a select committee of two be appointed to apply to Warsaw Lodge, No. 21, for its returns, to examine the same upon the points usually investigated by the Committee upon the Returns and Work of Lodges under charter; also to ascertain by any means in their power, whether said Lodge has conferred any of the degrees upon any person or persons while under indictment, and to report to the M.W.G. Master, who shall, at his discretion, suspend the charter of said Lodge until the next Annual Communication of this Grand Lodge (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 92*).

The committee apparently consulted with Warsaw Lodge and discovered that Bro. Montague had indeed made a report to the Warsaw Lodge at the time the petitions of the three men accused of Joseph Smith's murder were being considered. In *The History of the Grand Lodge of Illinois* written by John C. Reynolds, M.W.P. Grand Master, the following appears as a footnote:

The letter of Bro. Montague, approved by Warsaw Lodge, and upon which the committee based their report and suggestion to the M.W. Grand Master, admitted that the Lodge had received and acted upon the petitions of individuals who were under indictment for crime, and that the Lodge was apprized of the fact; that the propriety of their admission was made a question; and after mature deliberation and discussion, it was considered that the individuals did not stand as in ordinary cases of indictment. They were men of good standing in society, and respected by their fellow citizens, and against whom no

objection existed except the charges of the indictments and that that had been obtained by perjured witnesses, suborned for that purpose. The proceedings against the individuals were considered a persecution rather than a prosecution.

The Grand Secretary
(Reynold's 339-340)

The Grand Master reported as follows:

On the 22d of the same month I called the attention of the committee on the subject of Warsaw Lodge, No. 21, (see Proceedings, page 58), to their duties, and soon after received the statement and report which are hereto appended:

'Your committee beg leave to suggest to the M.W. Grand Master that, perhaps, it will not be necessary to inflict punishment to the extent of his authority; that, although the Lodge in question erred, and greatly erred, yet they conceive the error was an error of the head and not of the heart; that all the harm has been done in the case that can be done; the men have been since tried by the laws of their country and a jury of their peers, and acquitted.

All of which we most respectfully submit,

L. Lusk,

J. H. Holton,
Committee.'

(*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 115*)

Retrospection makes it clear that the heat of the moment determined the attitude and actions of the citizens of Hancock County. Their political power had vanished as the political promise of Nauvoo had skyrocketed into prominence. They felt not only threatened politically, but physically, for the Nauvoo Legion, well-trained and well-armed, stood at the ready. Fear of the religious teachings of the strange people who now lived side-by-side with them and who practiced the dreadful sin of polygamy also stirred emotional turmoil. To the people of Hancock County, in such a light, the murderers of Joseph Smith became heroic instead of hideous, and the citizens of the county naturally tried to protect them. Unfortunately, one of the methods used included quickly initiating the accused into the Masonic Lodge at Warsaw, a move which dismayed and flustered Grand Lodge officers. These men, with their knowledge of New York's Morgan Affair, had to contend

with the fact that actions of individuals are often erroneously attributed to the organizations to which they belong. This was especially the case in Hancock County where angry crowds surrounded the courthouse as judge and jury heard threats against their lives should Thomas Sharp and the others be found guilty. Several lists of persons identified in the mob which gathered at Carthage jail on the day of the murders are in existence as are letters from descendents of persons claiming to be in the mob. Perhaps the most complete and most documented book concerning the event is one by N. B. Lundwald, a devout Mormon, entitled *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. What this book is most important for is its recording of the emotional attitude of the times and the superstitious nature of many of the people of the era, Mormon and non-Mormon alike. Also included in the book is a list of the people reported to have been in the mob at Carthage. It is contained in a letter from Sheriff John Backenstos, a member of Nauvoo Lodge, to Brigham Young, dated June 29, 1844 and published in Lundwald's book. The important aspect of the list is the fact that almost every prominent family in Warsaw, indeed in Hancock County, was represented including many prominent Freemasons. Grand Lodge, therefore, had to move cautiously, to investigate thoroughly, and to follow both civil and Masonic law or run the risk of being thought a participant in the actions at Carthage. Grand Lodge did all it could do as it suspended the charter of Warsaw Lodge for a year. Lack of a legal indictment prevented Grand Lodge from any further action it might have desired to impose; yet, Warsaw Lodge was effectively not in existence for almost five years.

After hearing the report from his Committee on Warsaw Lodge, the Grand Master took the following action:

I adopted the recommendation of the committee with respect to the infliction of the punishment on the Lodge, and deemed that, attention having been called to the subject of caution and circumspection in all proceedings, and especially in the introduction of members into the Masonic family, a great end had been answered, and with this it would be well to let the Lodge off (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint* 115-116).

On October 5, 1846 the Grand Lodge adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That in consideration of the censure already passed upon Warsaw Lodge No. 21, this Grand Lodge receives said Lodge to their affectionate confidence (*G.L. Proceedings/Reprint 116*).

It is to be noted that Warsaw Lodge did not reclaim their charter for almost five years. Perhaps because most of the Lodge leadership, as well as most of the political leadership of the city of Warsaw, had fled in fear of retaliation from the Nauvoo Legion, and had simply never made it back to the town they had tried to protect from the newcomers who had destroyed their political power. In 1845, the State legislature revoked the Charter of the City of Nauvoo citing the abuse of its powers by city officials (England 297). The friction between the Mormons and the other residents of the area continued to be tense and violent. A power struggle ensued between the followers of one Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young, the chief of the Twelve Apostles (Arrington 114-117). Joseph Smith's wife, Emma, claimed the position of Prophet for her son Joseph Smith, Jr. only to be rebuffed by Brigham Young who ultimately became the sole ruler of the Church. Young strengthened the Church by strengthening his own power and becoming rather authoritarian in trying times. It was Young's decision, after negotiation and threats from State officials, to move his followers from Illinois to a place more fit for Zion. The trials and tribulations which occurred on the trek from Illinois to Utah is a fascinating story in itself, but not one to be discussed here. The Illinois experience was over for the Mormons and their enemies.

The Mormons had left Illinois; yet debate and accusations over the decade's events have filled the pages of many books since that time. Al Cerza reports that a prominent Mormon scholar informed him of the existence of a handwritten document found in the archives of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City. The document which purports to have been dictated by a H. G. Sherwood on October 8, 1843, and written down by a Thomas Bullock, states that L. V. Scovil, as the Senior Warden of Nauvoo Lodge, appeared before the Grand Lodge with the books and records of the Lodge. This claim is in direct contradiction to the records of the Grand Lodge as cited above. No substantiating records exist to prove the claims of the Sherwood document, while scores of persons were present at the Grand Lodge session, many of whom were sympathetic to the Mormon plight. In such case, it would seem highly unlikely that the official records of Grand Lodge could be altered in any way. This

also serves to point out the problem of accurate and true scholarship in the area of Mormon/Masonic relations, for to our knowledge this document, like so many others, is not available, in its original form, for use by non-Mormons. In such cases the scholar must, in integrity and necessity, consider the tangible and accessible evidence to be the actual record and, therefore, the truth.

Such is the history of the Masonic experience with the Mormon Church in the city of Nauvoo and in Hancock County. While there has been little interest on this subject in Illinois in recent years, interest may be generated in the future because of the opening of a new Mormon Temple in Glenview, Illinois, a suburb north of the City of Chicago. It is also of note that both the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and also The Re-organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are rebuilding and refurnishing in historical fashion many of the original buildings of Nauvoo. Many visitors already flock to this historical town. As it rises once again from its tragic history, perhaps it will become the "Williamsburg of the West," in which case a revitalization of the historical events surrounding Nauvoo, the Church and Freemasonry may occur. Yet, even though there exists in many interested in history a great wish to see the Mormon Temple of Nauvoo rebuilt, the sacred nature of such an edifice probably precludes such rebuilding just because we are curious.

Commentary

by Alphonse Cerza

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter has summarized, in as objective a manner as possible, the events which occurred in Nauvoo during 1841 to 1846 as disclosed by available official records from Masonic, Church and State archives. As would be supposed, the records from those volatile years are not as clear nor as complete as one would hope, and yet, they do exist and cannot be ignored. Nor can Mormon, nor Mason, contend that such records are incorrect and that they need to be rewritten for such attempts to discredit the official records of the time are simply self-serving tactics used only by the scholar who has a predisposed conclusion in mind. On the other hand, attempts to interpret documents at hand, while identifying your own bias and laying forth the facts as recorded, is a legitimate form of intellectual forum. It allows room for debate and also lays open the scholar's credentials for all to judge the credibility of the work at hand. With this in mind, the following commentary is offered in an attempt to add clarification to a debate where all too often opinions are stated as facts and recorded facts are relegated to the scrap heap, all without so much as an indication of what is fact and what is educated opinion. **At the outset, it must be said that all religious beliefs are, in the mind of the Freemason, sacred. No Freemason should sit in judgement on the right of another man to hold certain beliefs.** Simple logic tells us that the good man, whether Mason or not, has to accept the notions of another's faith. In addition the Freemason is admonished also to be accepting of the right of all others to hold a belief without persecution and without ridicule. It is hoped that the reader is now prepared to take this commentary for what it is worth, the educated opinions of a Masonic scholar.

The first statement to be made is that the opinion often found in books written by modern day Mormon scholars often infer that the

Masons of Hancock County were the sole cause of the troubles which dogged Joseph Smith and the Mormons of Nauvoo. Yet, a close look at what happened at Nauvoo indicates that some of the problems experienced in the area occurred because the Church was beginning to fall apart in 1841. The Prophet had discovered that he had several enemies within the hierarchy of the Church, enemies whom Mormon writers have since labeled Judases. Sidney Rigdon, William Cook Bennett, William Law, and Orson Pratt, among others, were openly criticizing Joseph Smith's handling of Church finances. They condemned his practice of mixing Church affairs with his desire to gain secular political power. Others were disturbed that Smith and a select few were secretly practicing polygamy and openly demanded that the Prophet return to the former base of his religious fervor. The phenomenal growth of the Lodge at Nauvoo did startle traditional Masons in the area, but it was from within the Church that several of Smith's major enemies arose. The growth of William Law's opposition press was so frightening to Smith that he ordered it destroyed. The opposition of John Cook Bennett was so strong that Bennett's excommunication quickly brought to a halt a phenomenal rise to stature within the Church which the Church has never been able to explain. True, these men were Masons, but, above all they were Mormons, and of great stature within the Church. The hard-working, honest, serious-minded Mormons of the time must have been thoroughly confused at these rumblings within the Church. Who were they to believe? Who were they to follow? It would seem, tragic as it may be, that a Church about to disintegrate was saved by the death of its founder who found in his death the unifying force of Martyrdom.

A second area of concern involves illegal practices which are claimed to be religious beliefs. One of the basic teachings of Freemasonry involves obedience to the laws under whose protection its members live. Linked to this teaching is the fraternal belief in the separation of Church and State. The following commentary will touch upon the practice of polygamy in Utah today by over 30,000 persons claiming to be Mormons. It will also examine the Church's claim that polygamy is the will of God. An examination of the doctrine of separation of Church and State will show how it was ignored in Nauvoo where a special charter was negotiated for and abused by Mormon leaders. One other concern involves the religious

compatibility of the beliefs of the Mormon Church and connected anti-Masonic postures. The concern involves the Fraternity's belief in one God and the Church's indication that many Gods exist throughout the universe and that each Mormon male may become a God if certain conditions are met (Flanders 192). This concern also relates not to the original Mormon beliefs, but to the nature and origin of the Temple Ceremony which was later added to Mormon theology.

The final concern involves what is perceived to be the authoritarian control of actions of individual Church members and how this control affects both Mormons and non-Mormons alike. It involves the perception that Church doctrine and Church action are not always consistent with each other. Still, even at this juncture, the reader is reminded that the following statements are educated opinions based on the facts as stated within the current text or presented in previous chapters. They are intended to stir investigation and thought.

GRAND LODGE AND THE CONSPIRACY THEORY

The first Grand Lodge of Illinois ceased to exist in the year 1826, presumably as a result of anti-Masonic sentiment arising from the disappearance of William Morgan at about that time. Yet, after the defeat of the anti-Masonic presidential candidate in the 1832 election, anti-Masonic sentiment began to subside and the Masons of Illinois once again began to discuss formation of a Grand Lodge within the State. Yet, before that could be done, several local Lodges had to be formed. On December 6, 1834 a group met in Quincy to prepare a petition requesting a dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Kentucky to form such a Lodge. Permission was granted and Bodley Lodge, U.D. was formed (Reynolds 105). Several other Lodges soon gained dispensations to operate within Illinois.

On May 1, 1837, Bodley Lodge adopted a resolution appointing a committee to determine how many Lodges existed within Illinois as a first step toward organizing a Grand Lodge. Alexander Dunlap and William B. Warren were the major forces behind the movement and carried the matter to many Lodges throughout the State. On April 6, 1840, a meeting was held in Jacksonville for the purpose of organizing such a Lodge. By the end of the day, Grand Lodge had been formed and organizational matters settled. Abraham Jonas was

elected Grand Master after several ballots and James Adams Deputy Grand Master. The Lodge then adjourned to April 28, 1840 to enable the Constitution and By-Laws to be printed, the Grand Lodge seal prepared and the newly elected, but absent, Grand Master to be present (Reynolds 132-133). Mervin B. Hogan, who is both a Mormon and a Freemason, often speculates in his books as to why Jonas was not present at the organizational meeting and presents many unsupported assumptions to suggest that a conspiracy was behind the formation of the Grand Lodge. Politics supposedly were involved and Brothers Jonas, Nye and Helm were all called scoundrels while Adams, Bennett and Smith, all Mormons, and all, as the fact supported suppositions found on page 10 indicate, could have played a part in any such conspiracy, political or not, which might have happened at the time.

TROUBLES AND THE CHURCH AT NAUVOO

Everywhere the Mormons settled they met opposition. In New York, Ohio and Missouri opposition, persecution and violence were encountered. When the Mormons were forced to flee Missouri they crossed into Illinois near Quincy and were welcomed with open arms by men and women who were warmly sympathetic and supportive. Yet, this attitude soon changed as the citizens of Hancock County began to perceive the Mormons as a strange, clannish people, aggressively supportive of their own and indifferent to others around them. Instead of joining as comrades with the long time residents of the area in political, social and economic pursuit, the Mormons soon eclipsed them and caused them to feel isolated. Aggressive proselytizing in Europe soon began to flood the area with thousands of strange foreigners, men not understood and thus not to be trusted. Thus, the characteristics which enabled the Mormons to succeed, cohesiveness and business dealings only with Mormons when possible, were the same elements which caused opposition to them to grow as non-Mormon businesses floundered and political power began to wane. In elections the Mormon practice of block voting soon became apparent as Mormon politicians began to replace long standing politicians. Coupled with the special characteristics of Nauvoo's Charter which allowed formation of the large Nauvoo Legion, this passing of political power from non-Mormon to Mormon hands became a frightening fact. All power in

Nauvoo, after all, was concentrated in the hands of one person, Joseph Smith, the Prophet. The Church and the government of Nauvoo were one and the same. As the Church organized the Danites and the rumors spread that they were Church assassins, fear grew in Hancock County. As rumors that polygamy was being practiced in Nauvoo were confirmed, fear grew in Hancock County. When Joseph Smith announced that he would run for the Presidency of the United States, fear grew in Hancock County and the area became quite ripe for irrational and violent action. Yet, these troubles were compounded by problems within the Church which were luridly exaggerated and laid before the entire world by fallen away Mormons like John Cook Bennett.

TROUBLES WITHIN THE CHURCH

As details of polygamy within Nauvoo and the hierarchy of the Church shocked the world, they also shocked the members of the Mormon Church, many of whom denounced the Church or called for Smith to renounce the practice of plural marriage. Bitter discussions and debates were held at which other areas of dissatisfaction soon began to arise. William Law charged Smith with trying to seduce his wife, John C. Bennett charged him with adultery and many Church members questioned the Prophet's financial and political dealings and the Church's role in his secular activities. A scrutiny of the written records of the time suggest that the Church was having major internal problems and that its growth, or very existence, was threatened by the developing schism. Past Mormon President Anthony Ivins, speaking of the time states:

If ever a man was in need of sympathy and the friendship of good men, that man was Joseph Smith. It was under these circumstances that Joseph Smith became a Mason (Ivins 124).

It would seem that the Prophet needed the unifying brotherhood of Freemasonry to restore unity to a confused and chaotic priesthood within his Church. Still, some of the more dissident voices had to be removed from Church authority for they offered too much support to the critical voice of the opposition press, *The Warsaw Signal*, and were even going to start an opposition newspaper within Nauvoo itself. After the printing press of the *Nauvoo Expositor* arrived and was used just once to denounce the perceived sins of Joseph Smith,

the Prophet acted and had the printing press destroyed and forced William Law, its proprietor to flee from the city. He excommunicated John Cook Bennett and waited as several other men began to quit their opposition or move from Nauvoo. Hancock County, as witness to this rough-shod behavior and well aware of the reputed activities of the Avenging Angels within the Danites, was, of course, very upset and fearful. Bennett was excommunicated.

THE FORMATION OF NAUVOO LODGE

If Anthony Ivins is to be believed, Freemasonry came to Nauvoo because Joseph Smith "was in need of sympathy and the friendship of good men." The leadership of his Church was in turmoil and a uniting catalyst was needed to cement them together. Yet, even with Ivins's statement we have no real way of knowing why or how Freemasonry really came to Nauvoo. Mervin Hogan infers "that the whole Masonic enterprise (at Nauvoo) was due to Jonas' efforts to attract votes which would elect him to the state legislature," and that Jonas and the other Masonic leaders of the time begged Joseph Smith to permit a Lodge to be established there. Without substantiation, Hogan goes on to suggest that Smith consented with great reluctance because he felt that the Masonic idea of brotherhood would help his group (Hogan *Vital* 20-23 and Smith 3). This idea is given in a straightforward manner as if proof of its truth were abundantly available and clear, thus Hogan falls victim to the "fault" he accuses so many other scholars of making, the fault of stating opinion as fact.

Among the written facts that do exist are records which show that John Cook Bennett, a Mormon leader, approached Bodley Lodge No. 1 of Quincy, Illinois, with a letter asking that Lodge to support the formation of a Lodge in Nauvoo. Thus far, this letter is the first documentation concerning a possible Lodge in Nauvoo. Suppositions may be made that Bennett surely would have consulted with Joseph Smith before the letter was sent, for Smith was the unquestioned leader in Nauvoo and dominated every aspect of Church policy and action, but documentation does not exist. The argument could be made, especially with the later statements made by President Ivins, that Smith was in great need of a unifying spirit to stabilize his Church and insure his own security. The authorities in Missouri still demanded that he face criminal charges. Yet, documentation does not exist to support the supposition. It could

easily be supposed, simply because of John Cook Bennett's recent spectacular rise to prominence with the Church hierarchy, second in power only to the Prophet, that whatever he did was only after securing the blessings of Joseph Smith so as not to jeopardize his own position in Joseph's eyes. Yet, written proof is not to be found. Still, the following suppositions seem to be strongly based upon fact.

First, that the earliest political success for Joseph Smith came at the hands of John Cook Bennett who was sent to negotiate with the state government for a city charter. Bennett returned with a charter unlike that granted to any city in Illinois in the State's history. It allowed the city of Nauvoo powers only the state was allowed previously. Quickly the Mormon leader began to use those powers to form the Nauvoo Legion, Nauvoo University and many other organizations of great benefit to both the city and the Church. During those negotiations Bennett met James Adams, a Mormon and one of the most influential men in the recent reorganization of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. It is reasonable to suspect that they talked not only about the Church and Masonry, but, as they were in a political setting, also about politics in Illinois, particularly the political aspirations of Abraham Jonas, the Grand Master of Masons in Illinois and an aggressively aspiring politician. This is especially possible, for Bennett made the request to Bodley Lodge not the other way around. It is also highly possible that Jonas, when approached, quickly saw a way to increase the size, not only of his small Grand Lodge, but also of the number of voters friendly to him.

Three names stand out insofar as the Nauvoo experience, Joseph Smith, John Cook Bennett, and Abraham Jonas. Some of the best, most detailed, most documented scholarship about the Nauvoo years is that of Mervin Hogan, and yet, occasionally, Hogan allows his own sentiment and bias to cloud already murky waters. In discussing the formation of Nauvoo Lodge, for instance, Hogan describes Joseph Smith as an innocent victim of circumstance, while condemning Bennett and Jonas as unscrupulous adventurers. He, while making such judgments about the part the three men played in the formation of Nauvoo Lodge, condemns two of the three after making interesting, and very plausible, but not substantiated cases against them while selectively ignoring what the same items of circumstantial evidence could be used to say about the third man, Joseph Smith, the Prophet. These suppositions are recorded

elsewhere in this text merely to show that when a scholar makes suppositions based on a certain group of facts or on certain items of evidence, he is under obligation to wring all possible suppositions from that material so that all sides of the issue are treated. The scholar cannot be selective in his research or presentation or his entire body of work becomes suspect.

IS MORMONISM COMPATIBLE WITH FREEMASONRY?

Over the years the question of Mormonism's compatibility with Freemasonry has been asked from time to time. In 1925 the Grand Lodge of Utah answered this question in the negative and added provisions to its law that the lodges of the state could not accept petitions from Mormons. This rule remained in place until the 1984 session of the Grand Lodge when it was repealed after an emotionally spirited discussion. During the years that the prohibition was in effect, a number of Mormons nevertheless filed petitions for membership in Masonic lodges in the state without disclosing their Mormon membership. How they religiously justified doing this is a mystery.

In Utah, the conflicts between Church and Lodge will always be a vital question to be considered because of the dominant position occupied by the Church in that state. Outside the State of Utah, Freemasons have given the question little attention and have looked upon the relationship between Freemasonry and the Mormons as a "curiosity" not worthy of attention. But what happened in Illinois in the 1840's, the active Mormon proselytizing of Illinois in recent years, and the construction of a new Mormon Temple (completed in 1985) in Glenview (a northern suburb of Chicago) makes the Mormon question in Illinois a subject of great interest.

The subject becomes a bit more complicated because of the existence of a second Mormon Church, the Reorganized Mormon Church with headquarters in Independence, Missouri. With the death of Joseph Smith, the undisputed leader of the Mormons, there was considerable confusion and debate on who was to take his place as the head of the Church. Brigham Young emerged as the leader, but almost immediately rival groups appeared. Eventually most of them disappeared, the Utah group emerged supreme, and the Reorganized Church a weak second.

The Reorganized Church was headed by the twenty-eight year old son of Joseph Smith who adopted the earlier views of his father, but cleansed it by rejecting the idea of plural wives, the plurality of gods, the baptism of the dead, the temple ceremony, and other practices found abhorrent to other established religions and to the Masonic Fraternity. *Many members of this Reorganized Church, outside of Utah, have become Masons. Its relationship with the Utah group is a polite one.* Both groups are engaged in restoring and maintaining the Mormon homes and artifacts in Nauvoo and in maintaining informative programs for visitors to the area.

There are a number of phases within this subject that need separate consideration. All of them indicate that Freemasonry and Mormonism are incompatible.

1. The Mormon Church is Anti-Masonic.

The Book of Mormon has a number of antagonistic references to "secret combinations," yet, Smith and most leaders of the early Church became Freemasons in 1842 even though this was in direct opposition to Prophet Smith made in the 1820's. When this is brought to the attention of Mormons, the earliest answer was that these references relate to an early unidentified "secret society" that existed in American history and does not refer to Freemasonry. In recent years the answer has been that since Freemasonry is not a "secret society," its members and philosophy is widely known, as that term is properly understood, that the statements in the Book of Mormon do not relate to Freemasonry. These views are rationalizations in the light of present day ideas. The real test is the question: What was in the mind of Joseph Smith when he wrote these words into the Book of Mormon? Was he not influenced when he was engaged in the project of translating the gold plate, by the anti-Masonic craze which was rampant in Western New York at the time? In all likelihood the accusation that Freemasonry was a secret society and conspiratorial was in the mind of the young Joseph Smith. The anti-Masons with their conventions, speeches, newspapers, exposés, and public exhibitions of the claimed Masonic ritual must have had some influence on him. The Book of Mormon (Ethel, Chapter 8) uses the following language: "the power of the devil to administer oaths" (verse 16); "and to murder" (verse 16); "they formed a 'secret combination' " (verse 18); "For the Lord

worketh not in secret combinations" (verse 19); "their oaths and combinations" (verse 20); "such secret combinations, to get power and gain" (verse 22); "murderous combinations" (verse 23); "secret combination . . . because of the blood of them who have been slain" (verse 24). In that part of the Book of Mormon entitled The Book of Helaman may be found the following language: "secret combinations" (Chapter 3, verse 23). Chapter 6 of said book contains the following language: "secret signs and their secret words (verse 22); "and thus they might distinguish a brother who has entered into the covenant" (verse 23); "And whoever of those who belonged to their band should reveal unto the world of their wickedness and their abominations, should be tried, not according to the laws of their country" (verse 24); "secret oaths and covenants" (verse 25); "oaths and covenants" (verse 26); "the work of darkness and of secret murder" (verse 30); and "their secret murders and combinations" (verse 38). These are words and ideas that were constantly being repeated by the anti-Masons after the disappearance of William Morgan and which could not have escaped the attention of Joseph Smith as he translated the golden plates. It seems that he just placed them in a different context in what he dictated to the scrivener.

Flanders, in his book entitled Nauvoo, on page 249 stated: "The Book of Mormon stressed the dangers and abominations of secret societies; and a revelation from Smith in 1831 voiced the warning that "a thing . . . is had in secret chambers, to bring to pass even your destruction in process of time, and ye know it not . . ." And he further states that there was opposition to Freemasonry in Nauvoo "but after Dr. Bennett came into the Church a great change of sentiment seemed to take place," as the Temple Ceremony, shrouded in the mystery of secrecy was adopted. Mormon leaders apologize for such secrecy, by saying that it is not secrecy which keeps the ceremonies from being revealed but a sacredness only to be shared with the high priesthood of the Church.

In recent years when Mormons are asked whether Freemasonry is compatible with Mormonism they usually answer by quoting their Articles of Faith, as set forth in Smith's book, "The Pearl of Great Price" one of the four official books of the Church. These thirteen paragraphs of basic religious beliefs are in general terms and are not specific enough to be helpful. Furthermore, actions speak louder than words and (as will be shown later) the totalitarian, or prophetic,

demands of the Hierarchy of the Mormon Church are more persuasive in casting light on this subject. It is necessary to go beyond mere general statements.

The sugar-coated statements of certain Mormons about Freemasonry should be considered. In 1934 there was published a 254 page book entitled *The Relationship of 'Mormonism' and Freemasonry*, written by President Anthony W. Ivins, a Mormon. On pages eight and nine of this book it is stated that the Mormon Church has no quarrel with Freemasonry but it advises its members to refrain from joining secret oath-bound societies. The reason for this advice is stated to be that there exists within the Church all the necessary elements for the spiritual, social, and ethical needs of its members. It is also stated that a Mason who becomes a Mormon is not prohibited from holding his lodge membership and that his membership will have no effect upon his Mormon membership. The demands of the Church financially and its obligatory time for serving the Church makes it difficult to believe that peer pressure is not used to discourage Masonic activity.

Churches have their doors open for all persons to enter. Even sinners are welcomed so that they can be reformed. The Mormon Church is no exception. But we must observe that the Mormon Church is more than a religious organization. It is also a political, social, economic organization which dominates every aspect of the lives of its members in Utah and seeks to control every activity in the community. This will be discussed in more detail later.

The word "Free" in Freemasonry is not an empty phrase. Freedom of choice in all matters is basic in the Craft. It is non-existent in Mormonism.

In Illinois the petition for membership contains this question: "Are you a member of any organization the regulations of which are incompatible with membership in the Masonic Fraternity? If so specify . . ." So the question of compatibility is more than an academic one.

2. The Mormons are Constantly accusing the Masons of Having Murdered, or Having Instigated the Murders of Joseph Smith and his Brother.

No one knows who killed Joseph Smith and his brother and at this late date it would be difficult to determine the matter. The small

number of members of the local Masonic lodges could not have made any material contribution to the antagonism against the Mormons which led to the events at the Carthage Jail. It was the internal troubles in Nauvoo which had nothing to do with the Mormon religion which were the cause of the downfall of Joseph Smith.

Briefly stated, on June 7 the first and only issue of *The Nauvoo Expositor* was published. It contained many serious accusations against Joseph Smith including his land dealings, abuse of powers granted by the city's charter, his political machinations, and his "moral imperfections," which probably referred to his plural marriages. On June 8 Joseph Smith called a meeting of the City Council to investigate the newspaper. This meeting was postponed until June 10, at which time Joseph Smith denied all the charges made in the newspaper and the matter was discussed. Joseph Smith urged that the Council declare the newspaper to be a nuisance. A resolution was adopted to that effect and the Mayor, Joseph Smith, was directed to abate the nuisance. He immediately ordered the Marshal, with the aid of troops, to destroy the press. This was done and all copies of the newspaper in sight were burned and the type was thrown into the street. The apostates who owned the newspaper fled to Warsaw and Carthage. *The Warsaw Signal* reported the event in detail and accused Joseph Smith of a long list of crimes. The editor of the newspaper made a formal complaint and a writ was issued to arrest the persons responsible for the destruction of the printing equipment. But the officer was unable to execute the writ because of the opposition of the defendants. On June 12 *The Warsaw Signal* reported what had happened and called for a war to exterminate the Mormons. The Governor urged everyone to refrain from acting in a way that might be regretted. On June 21 the Governor arrived in Carthage. He negotiated with the defendants and convinced them to surrender. On June 24 all the defendants and Joseph Smith and his brother were placed in Carthage jail. On June 27 a mob stormed the jail. No one has been able to report the details of what happened and even the few eye witnesses do not agree on the details. The number of persons constituting the mob differ from reports from fifty to one hundred men with blackened faces to obscure their identity. The siege with plenty of shooting lasted only three minutes. The local Grand Jury investigated the matter and a number of men were indicted and charged with the murders. While the defendants awaited

trial, two of them filed petitions in a Masonic lodge and were accepted as members; this caused some difficulty at Grand Lodge but, since all the defendants were found "not guilty," nothing came of the complaint. This event has been given more attention here than is warranted because of the repeated accusations that the Masons murdered Joseph Smith and his brother. One present day Mormon writer has even gone so far as to state that Joseph Smith knew who his murderers were. No responsible author (including Mormons who have written about the matter) has made such an unfounded accusation. We call attention to some of the material that has been published along this line.

In 1952 there was published a book entitled "The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith," being a collection of a variety of pro-Mormon items compiled by N. B. Lundwall. Most of the material is hearsay and all of it is one-sided. There are a number of items reproduced in the book accusing the Masons of killing Joseph Smith and his brother. Here are some examples:

On page 65, quoting from E. Cecil McGavin's book "Mormons and Masonry," on pages 16-17, it states Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were massacred through the instrumentality of some of the leading men of the fraternity and that Masons were among the mob that murdered them.

On page 101 of the same book it is stated that from reliable statements that the mob that killed the prophet included members of Masonry.

It has been stated that in the Archives of the Mormon Church in Utah there is a handwritten Journal of Wilford Woodruff, the fourth President of the Mormon Church. Under the date of August 19, 1860 it is stated that Brigham Young said at that time that the people of the United States had sought their destruction and that they worked through Freemasonry to accomplish it. He also stated that Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith were put to death by Masons and that there were delegates from various lodges of the country to see that Joseph Smith was put to death.

3. The Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony Constitutes Masonic Clandestinitism.

In the early days of the Mormon Church it is believed that there was adopted a simple ceremony of "purification" consisting of

washing and anointing the new member. This ceremony had a religious purpose. It is to be noted that the Masonic ceremonies of the three degrees have a different purpose: The unique use of builders' tools as symbols to teach basic moral lessons. Because of these two different purposes of the ceremonies we must assume that the two ceremonies will not be exactly the same. An authentic detailed comparison of the two ceremonies would be impossible and also is not really necessary. The earliest printed description of the Mormon endowment ceremony is "The Sublime and Ridiculous Blended," by I. M. Van Dusen, published in 1848.

The Mormons admit that there is a similarity between the two ceremonies. The Mormons claim that their ceremony was divinely inspired and it was incorporated into Mormonism before Joseph Smith became a Mason and that, therefore, it was not copied from Freemasonry. It is admitted that the ceremony was revealed to Joseph Smith after he received the Masonic degrees. They deliberately overlook that Joseph Smith was an impressionable youth growing up in Western New York during the Morgan affair when exposés of the ritual were in general circulation in many forms, preachers were fulminating against the "evils" of Freemasonry, and there were theatrical performances presented claiming to be representations of Masonic ceremonies. He, no doubt, was exposed to these matters and he must have been impressed and influenced when he was preparing the translation of the golden plates and formulating his religious ceremonies in his mind. The use of symbols must have impressed him because it is an effective way to teach. The elaborate expansion of the Mormon ceremony from its simple ceremony of purification, it would seem, occurred several months after Joseph Smith became a Mason. The conferring of the degrees probably renewed his knowledge of the effective use of symbols and planted the seed which eventually emerged to incorporate symbols and other items into the Temple ceremony which was first instituted on May 4, 1842, forty-nine days after Smith became a Master Mason. It has even been reported that the first endowment ceremony took place in the premises of Nauvoo Lodge.

There can be no question that in the Mormon ceremony the garment worn by the new member contains a square and compasses and that the garment cut at the knee, is held together by strings without the use of any metal. Also before placing the garment on, the

new member is required to take an oath of secrecy. Other symbols familiar to Masonry used by the Mormons are the all-seeing eye and the beehive which is everywhere in evidence in Utah.

One present-day Mormon writer, Mervin Hogan, has stated that both the Masonic and the Mormon ceremonies have been derived from the same source, the Garden of Eden! He quotes from the fanciful history of Dr. James Anderson and closes his eyes to the fact that today no one pays any serious attention to the historical part of the famous Constitution the value of which is based solely on that part of the book which summarizes the Ancient Manuscripts. Hogan also compares the ceremonies of Freemasonry and those of the Mormon Temple Ceremony, by stating that they are similar, yet, although he devotes several pages to directly quoting from Masonic ceremonies, never does he reveal any detail of the Temple ceremony. A strange practice, indeed, for any serious academic scholar to follow.

Yet, it cannot be expected, nor would a sincere scholar wish, for Hogan, as a Mormon, to ignore the wishes of his Church concerning silence related to what the Church considers sacred revelations only for the select priesthood. How can a scholar's work be respected if he ignores the dictates of his conscience and his belief. Yet, it needs to be expected that non-Mormon scholars will probe into all areas concerning the relationship between Masonry and the Mormon Church and raise questions, to which hopefully Mormon scholars, not the Church, for their position is understood, will give serious attention and answers with as much clarity and candor as possible. Therefore, scholarships using secondary sources, must be found acceptable, and such research cannot be sloughed off by comments such as Hogan's that "any individual who lacks the awareness or knowledge of the profundity of the symbolism related to the Mormon Temple and its several ceremonies can scarcely be considered as qualified to speak with any degree of authority on Mormonism." (Hogan—*What If* 2). Nor can arguments be made that deductions made by such scholars, are "devoid of the scientific spirit of modern research," as claimed by E. Cecil McGavin (p. 6) unless all relevant materials, including the Temple Ceremony be made public. Even Hogan's supposition that Smith was reluctant to establish a lodge at Nauvoo, which reluctance by the way is stated by Hogan as fact, cannot be totally dismissed by scholars, for

suppositions are all that scholars can make about matters kept secret and those who keep the secrets, including sacred religious and fraternal secrets, must not only tolerate, but either choose to ignore, or struggle to refute such suppositions (p. 13). This is especially true in this case, since, an admission that much of the ritual of the Temple Ceremony was borrowed from the ancient rituals of Freemasonry, would weaken the influence of the Church and its claim to be a result of revelations from God.

4. The Totalitarian Structure of the Mormon Church Destroys Freedom of Choice.

Mormons are taught to believe that Joseph Smith was in touch with God and received Revelations from Him. If one believes this then he cannot and should not at any time and in any way question Mormon beliefs. Joseph Smith was the prophet and not to be questioned. And since it is taught that the First President has stepped into the shoes of Joseph Smith this head of the Church also is in touch with God and when he speaks he is the voice of God.

In 1985 Dallin Oakes, an able and prominent Church leader, while speaking at a symposium at Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah, stated that Mormons should not rely on historical facts but place their reliance on the authenticity of the Church. He also said that one cannot be critical of the official views of the Church and that an officer cannot be criticized for performing the duties of any Church office "to which he or she has been called of God. It does not matter that the criticism is true."

In 1985 there was published an award winning book written by Linda Newell, entitled "Emma Hale Smith," being a biography of Joseph Smith's wife. She was rewarded by the hierarchy by being barred from speaking at Mormon Church functions (*Spectrum* April 1986, 21). And Juanita Brooks, who wrote a carefully documented account of the Mountain Meadow Massacre, was technically excommunicated from the Church. Sonja Johnson, who opposed the Church's view on the Equal Rights Amendment and complained that the males ruled and dominated the Church, was excommunicated and her family was broken up as a result. In each of these instances, and many others that can be listed, taking a position other than the official one assumed by the Hierarchy meant trouble.

In recent years there has come to light an 1825 letter written by Joseph Smith in which he describes occult methods used by him to find buried treasure unrelated to the Golden Plates; this creates the impression that maybe such means were used to find the all important plates. There has also come to light an 1830 letter written by Martin Harris (one of the three witnesses attesting to the validity of the Book of Mormon) in which he describes how the Golden Plates were guarded by a white salamander, a traditional symbol of the occult. These letters are at variance with the official line of the Church. Leaders of the Church have said these letters are interesting but they have no bearing on the history of the Church. But some members are deeply disturbed by these things.

The members of the Mormon Church have little freedom of choice. They are expected to consult with Church leaders on such basic decisions as to what education shall be secured, what occupation shall be followed, and who the member shall marry. Becoming a Mormon means total commitment to the Church, its beliefs, its practices, and complying with all orders of the Church officers. Failure to conform is considered a serious offense. Donating time to the work of the Church and young men leaving home for two years to do missionary work at their own expense is one of the requirements. If one does not conform to these rules, peer pressure can become unpleasant and sometimes even oppressive. Anyone desiring to advance in the organizational structure of the Church must conform without question. To cite a few examples that come to mind, L. N. Scoville, who was active in the lodge at Nauvoo, is reported as having on a number of occasions suggested to Brigham Young that a Masonic lodge be formed in Utah; he was not only rebuffed but was never advanced in his status within the Church. In recent years Masonic historians have been ordered to follow the "Church line." One able student, Leonard J. Arrington, was appointed the first official historian of the Church and served for a number of years and then was removed as the Director of the History Division of the Mormon Church apparently because his views were in conflict with the views of the hierarchy of the Church.

In recent years, Jim Richardson and John A. Farrell, reporters employed by *The Denver Post*, spent several months in Utah interviewing many persons about the every day working of the Church there and they wrote a series of articles on the result of their

work. The report clearly shows that the Church dominates every phase of the lives of the members and that they have no freedom of choice. Some time later Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley wrote a book entitled, "America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power," published in 1984, and arrived at the same conclusion.

After all, how can anyone doubt or question those who speak with the voice of God?

5. The Words of the Hierarchy of the Mormon Church and its Action are not always Consistent.

During the Civil War, Brigham Young gave lip service to the North, but secretly he was waiting patiently until both sides had decimated themselves so that he could step in, save the country, and then as head of the Mormon Church rule the country.

The polygamy Revelation, made public in 1852, and the practice of plural marriages by leaders of the Church and later by others, is something that is a great embarrassment to the Church. The Book of Mormon states its opposition to plural marriages, and yet Joseph Smith revealed to a chosen few that he had received a Revelation that plural marriages were permitted by God. He entered into at least forty-eight plural marriages (as authenticated by Fawn M. Brodie in her famous book). And yet Joseph Smith repeatedly denied that he had engaged in plural marriages and on occasion also denied that such a Revelation had been received. "It is curious also that in his letters from Liberty Jail in Missouri, when he answered charges that the Gentiles had made against his people, Joseph Smith denied polygamy—curious because it was one of the few things that had not been charged against them. (O'Dea, p. 61)

The subject of polygamy cannot be brushed aside easily; the Mormons would rather not talk about this subject. It is sometimes claimed that Joseph Smith advocated plural marriages privately as early as 1830. (O'Dea, p. 61) One of the reasons for leaving Illinois and settling in the Salt Lake area was that the Mormons could engage in plural marriages without interference. In 1852 Brigham Young officially advocated plural marriages. In 1890 Wilford Woodruff, First President of the Church, issued the Proclamation against polygamy. It has been reported that between 1890 and 1904 at least two hundred and fifty Church approved polygamous marriages took place, including one involving the President of the Church. It seems

that after statehood was achieved in 1896 there was an increase in plural marriages in Utah. Though officers of the Church acquired plural wives after 1890, they continued to deny this publicly. Since 1904 the Church leaders have tried to end the practice of plural marriages in the United States but have closed their eyes to such marriages in Mexico and elsewhere.

Fundamentalist Mormon groups have ignored the policy of the Church and have openly advocated and practiced plural marriages. And individual members have repeatedly ignored the policy of the Church, apparently relying on the Revelation to Joseph Smith and believing that the Proclamation is not a revocation of the Revelation, but merely a man-made rule. This disobedience to federal law, as well as the abhorrent nature of polygamy itself, suggests that Freemasonry and Mormonism are not compatible.

Commentary

by Robin L. Carr

Western Illinois was a little populated wilderness during the 1830's. Small towns dotted the prairie, mostly along the Mississippi River and life, though it moved slowly, for the industrial revolution had not fully blossomed in the United States, was hard. People worked hard, lived hard, played hard and worshipped hard. Many of the folk in Hancock County, Illinois were second generation immigrants. Most were Protestant and, therefore, almost all were leary of any religion which showed an inclination to enter politics—for just a few years before hadn't their ancestors fled religious persecution and hadn't part of the revolution their grandfathers fought in had something to do with religious freedom for all guaranteed by a strict separation of Church and state?

At that time, stood on the banks of the Mississippi, a small town called Warsaw. Warsaw was a seat of power at that time for it was the largest city in Illinois and was still growing. It promised to become a thriving metropolis to rival even New York and Washington. With its position as the largest in the state, the citizens of Warsaw pushed to gain the advantage which was usually attendant to such a position. Her citizens controlled all the politics of Hancock County and had a great say in the body politic and the economic base of all of Western Illinois. Her elite planned the social calendar of the area and had a say even with politicians of the statewide stature of Stephen A. Douglas and Abe Lincoln. Social, economic and political power were all enjoyed by the city of Warsaw and its most prominent leaders.

In Warsaw at the time was a Masonic Lodge that had been constituted soon after the fear of the Anti-Masonic Party had died down. This Lodge had over the years become a social hub for the community. Anyone who was anyone belonged to Warsaw Lodge. It was here that all town issues were discussed and solutions to town and county problems explored. It was here that politicians met the voter on an equal footing. Fellowship and good will prevailed in

Warsaw Lodge and all were in mutual agreement on most issues. Warsaw Lodge was a bastion of conservative American and Christian values and a strong supporter of the status quo. Nothing was broken, nothing needed fixing. In other words, the Lodge was an honorable place, a good place, to be.

Hancock County was a quiet place where men farmed, or shod horses or practiced country law. A quiet place where women shopped and cooked and sewed and washed dishes on which to serve homecooked meals and the apple pie and hoe cakes their families liked to eat. Indeed the adults worried as their children rode roboggans down the steep hillside roads of Warsaw or swam in the beloved, but worrisome Mississippi. Young girls flirted and young men courted on the streets of Warsaw and a few scalawags even gambled in the alleyways behind the stables, but still, Warsaw was a quiet, down home place, a good place to settle down and to raise a family. The economy was booming, society becoming more refined and state politicians were paying court to the many voters in the quickly growing town. Quincy, Carthage and the smaller towns in Hancock County, all looked to Warsaw to lead the way to prominence and she was not shirking the calling.

Thus, safely secure, with all indications pointing toward a glowing future, the citizens of Warsaw and Western Illinois were horrified in 1839 to hear stories of massacre and religious persecution coming from the neighboring state of Missouri. The tales told of the persecution of a small religious group called the Mormons who had been driven, first from New York, then from Ohio and now were, under an order from Governor Boggs of Missouri to be driven from the state or else exterminated. Memories of the past told to them by parents and grandparents flooded the minds of the citizens of Warsaw who prayed for religious tolerance to prevail and who began to gather relief materials to send to the victims of the folly. When the Mormon Saints fled into Illinois, the citizens of Quincy, Warsaw and Commerce welcomed them with open arms. Blankets, food, medicine and human warmth were extended by Hancock County and graciously received by the Mormon refugees. The Mormons were found to be a gentle and caring people steeped in conservatism and religion, all characteristics acceptable to the prominent elite of the county.

The wet spring brought the fever to the swamplands where the Mormons camped, yet, the Saints were able to survive and to plan and build for the future. The man these Saints called the Prophet came to Commerce in 1839 and soon began to buy up the farm land round about, for, the year before had been a hard one for farmers. The town of Commerce, sitting on a bend in the Mississippi, was purchased and renamed, Nauvoo, which meant "the beautiful city." Smith sent out missionaries to the East, to England and to Europe and the drive was successful. People kept coming and coming. People and more people and more people. Many were foreigners, many were from the bottom of European society, many were undesirable. At first, however, the powerful in Warsaw were happy to see the phenomenal growth of Nauvoo for it was an enlarging of the political base of Hancock County. Perhaps, they thought, control of the statehouse could come within reach. Things looked good.

Yet, all was soon to turn sour as the population of Nauvoo grew to 3,000, then 5,000 and then to 12,000 while Warsaw remained under 5,000 in population. Nauvoo was now the social hub of Hancock County. Nauvoo now was able to control the political and economic power of the Western part of Illinois and Nauvoo certainly was up to the task, for as the people of Warsaw soon discovered, the Mormons voted as a bloc—not loyal to the Whigs or the Democrats, but totally at the will of their spiritual, social and economic prophet, Joseph Smith. The place to be was no longer Warsaw but Nauvoo if you desired to be somebody. Money and power were fast draining from Warsaw and the once powerful did not like it. They regrouped and watched carefully in an attempt to understand just what had happened. The usurpers had better beware.

Observation and spying soon began to unravel the mystery about the Mormons. Warsaw learned that the strange man who led Nauvoo, Joseph Smith, had witched for water and buried treasure as a youth. That he had been arrested several times and that he even claimed to be able to talk to the angels and even to God Himself. They discovered that the Mormons believed that Church and state were one and that in a Mormon state, the government would be the Church and the Church the state. Joseph Smith would rule. First Zion, which was an area extending from Indiana to California, then the United States and finally the world would be a Mormon

Empire—because God had commanded it. God's kingdom on earth was not just spiritual, but political as well. Yet who was this God, for spies heard talk about several gods and of man becoming god.

Observation also revealed the powerful why the lands they were trying to sell on the market were unprofitable, for Joseph Smith had commanded that the people buy only from the Church and the Church stores, all of which he controlled. No wonder Warsaw's powerful were failing economically. And they were unhappy.

Quickly the newspapers of Hancock County began to ask questions about the separation of Church and state. They began to discuss stories from Missouri about Mormons stealing horses, and goods, and children. The once powerful continued to spy and report. They learned that Smith was going to run for the office of President of the United States. They found Church newspapers which confirmed that there was, indeed, a violent band within the Church dedicated to its protection at all costs. Stories soon floated along the river of Danite groups sending Avenging Angels out to assassinate those opposed to the Church or to keep the Mormon flock in line by castrating a straying male and hanging his privates on his barn door for all to see. Joseph Smith denied most of the stories, condemned the Danites and tried to dispel the growing tumult, but the people of Hancock County believed and because they believed, any murders, thefts, indeed any mischief in the area, was laid at the feet of those Mormon dogs.

Yet, the most damaging revelation was yet to come. The whispered rumor that came as on the winds, that God commanded that each Mormon man must have more than one wife. From a small whispered rumor the storm quickly grew to engulf all of Hancock County and to concern all of the world. Imagine the impact the revelation had upon a community steeped in religious conservatism and suffering economic and political ruin at the hands of people now discovered to be committing acts found vile and disgusting and beyond belief. Yes, the men of Hancock County had been hardened mentally and physically by the hard prairie lives they led, but what they saw as legalized fornication was really too much even for them and they reacted accordingly.

Now, Freemasonry had come to Illinois in the 1820's, faded as a result of the anti-Masonic Morgan affair in the 30's and was just renewing itself as the forties began. In 1840 a new Grand Lodge of

Illinois was formed. Its leader was Abraham Jonas, a very ambitious man who wished to be Governor of the State of Illinois. Among the lodges instrumental in revitalizing the new Grand Lodge was Warsaw Lodge located in conservative Hancock County. This Lodge was founded on the traditional Masonic tenets of "one body of men believing in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God." Its belief in God was staunch and very conservative. Religious toleration was a stated goal, but the separation of Church and state was seen as essential to both religious freedom and the practice of Democratic government. Women were honored in Warsaw Lodge and the family was held up as the keystone to moral and ethical life. The status quo was an idea of great value in Warsaw. It is no wonder then that the people of Warsaw, including the Masons, looked askance at Mormonism which seemed to deny monotheism, to argue against the idea of separation of Church and state and which, if rumors were true, undermined the sanctity of the family by following the degrading practicing of forcing women into polygamy.

Yet, the Lodge at Warsaw stood firmly for religious tolerance even in this instance. Then, in 1840, one John Cook Bennett, a Mason from Ohio who had converted to Mormonism, approached Bodley Lodge in Quincy requesting that they support a request for a dispensation to form and open a lodge in Nauvoo. Sponsorship by a chartered Lodge was a required necessity for a dispensation to be issued to form any new Lodge. Bodley Lodge denied the request. In fact, no Lodge in Western Illinois would have supported such a request, for they all felt that the Mormons had been found to be undesirable. Yet, the Grand Master of Masons in Illinois, Abraham Jonas, knowing full well the feeling of the Lodges in the Western part of the state, proceeded to issue a dispensation to Nauvoo Lodge. Why? Could it have been because of political ambition as suggested by a noted Mormon scholar? It is true that the Mormon vote could have propelled Jonas into the Governorship! Or, perhaps Jonas owed James Adams, co-founder of the Grand Lodge and its principal financial backer a favor, for it has been revealed by Mervin Hogan, the noted Mormon scholar, that Adams had been a secret Mormon convert for quite a while before the dispensation was ordered. Yet, what did the Mormons at Nauvoo have to gain from the establishment of a Masonic Lodge in their city? How could the

leadership of the Church justify the sanctioning, within the bounds of their major city, a Masonic Lodge, a secret society which the holy Book of Mormon denounced as the work of the devil?

Anthony Ivins, a deceased President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, gave an answer to that question in one of his many books by stating that at the time when the Lodge at Nauvoo was being formed, there was great unrest and dissension occurring within the Church. The Prophet, Joseph Smith, was dismayed with the turmoil and was attempting to find methods whereby the dissension could be quieted and unity brought to his priesthood. Ivins states, "If ever a man was in need of sympathy and the friendship of good men, that man was Joseph Smith. It was under these circumstances (being charged with offences against the civil law and with perverting the word of God) that Joseph Smith became a member of the Masonic fraternity. He hoped to find there the friendship and protection which he so much craved, but which had been denied him outside of a few devoted adherents." Thus to argue, as does Mervin Hogan, that Joseph Smith was reluctant to establish and join a Masonic Lodge, seems controversial in the least.

Grand Master Jonas issued the dispensation for a Lodge to be formed in Nauvoo and soon Joseph Smith was made a Mason at his hands. His brother Hyrum became Master of the Lodge and John Cook Bennett was the first Secretary. Within weeks of becoming a member of the Masonic Fraternity, Joseph Smith revealed that the Masonic Lodge was only a corrupt form of "the true Church" and that he would reform it and make it vital once more. Within two months the Temple Ceremony was revealed and controversy again surrounded the Church for the ceremony contained many symbols, grips and words which were prevalent within Masonic life and ritual. Smith was accused of plagiarism.

Yet, if Joseph's membership in the Fraternity came about as an attempt to halt dissension within the Church, what was that dissension? A close look at the Church documents and news accounts of the time reveal that three major points were the basis for most of the internal unrest within the Church. One area concerned the fact that Joseph Smith, who had to approve the Nauvoo site before the Mormons settled there, had bought up most of the land in the area, and at depressed prices because of a drought. Other Mormon speculators had followed. Yet, Joseph ordered that

Mormons should buy from the Church, which to most meant they were to buy from Joseph himself. Joseph was attaining wealth while other Mormons were losing money. Secondly, Mormon membership had largely been recruited from among persons who believed in the separation of Church and state and Joseph's political aspirations and his statement that the Church and state were one and the same could not be swallowed. Yet, the thing that rankled, confused, and angered many devout members of the Church was the idea of plural marriage. Mormons had, for the most part, been mainline Christians before their conversion and polygamy was not an acceptable concept, let alone a practice to be tolerated. So when William Law and Sidney Rigdon, two well-placed and influential leaders of the Church, charged that Joseph Smith practiced plural marriage and that he had made advances to their wives, the Church was stunned. Tempers flared and the tight brotherhood, or priesthood, which had cemented the Church together was quickly beginning to fail. The Church was being rent assunder.

During the time just before these problems became public within the Church, the desire to have a Masonic Lodge with its time proven bonds seems to have come into being. It becomes quite plausible that Smith, under such internal pressure, might have viewed its history of brotherhood and unity as a method to restore and strengthen the bond necessary to preserve his Church. The Lodge could be a testing ground where men could be observed for their capacity for loyalty, their ability to keep a secret, their ability and desire to lead. It could be the glue that would bind up the Church forever. It is not hard to believe that many ideas were borrowed from the Masonic ritual for the Temple Ceremony, if a binding force were needed to re-cement the priesthood, to repair the Church. It is a fact, readily admitted to, that any Mason would recognize many of the Signs, Words and Grips found within the Temple Ceremony. If the bonding effect of the Masonic Lodge was something Joseph Smith desired, there was no better way to quickly institute those bonds than for Smith himself to join, for loyalists would join out of respect and dissidents out of fear, for Joseph Smith was the absolute religious and political power within Nauvoo. He was, after all, the Prophet, chosen of God. It is no wonder that Nauvoo Lodge, within one year, was the largest lodge in the State of Illinois.

Yet, an explosion was about to occur, for William Cook Bennett, Smith's right hand man. The man who had procured a special and unique charter for Nauvoo which made Nauvoo almost autonomous. The man Smith had helped to elect as mayor of Nauvoo. The man Smith had appointed President of Nauvoo University and had placed at the head of the largest military unit in Illinois, The Nauvoo Legion. John Cook Bennett was found to be a scoundrel who had not only been expelled from his Lodge in Ohio, but had abandoned a wife and child there as well. Smith was forced by the outcry to confront Bennett who became defensively belligerent and began to accuse the Prophet of worse deeds and released to the Mormon community, and later to the world, charges that Smith and his top aides operated a system of plural marriage. Quickly Bennett was expelled from the Masonic Lodge and then from the Church. It is at this point that Sidney Rigdon, one of the original twelve, and William Law, a more recent Church leader, stepped forth to support Bennett's contentions and to demand that Smith repent and return to his former wisdom and vision. Smith denied wrongdoing and vehemently denied and deplored polygamy. Yet, he very quickly reacted to see that Law and Rigdon were excommunicated from the Church.

But, Law was not one to give up easily. With speed he organized a group that purchased a printing press and planned to print a newspaper, *The Nauvoo Expositor* which would, in his mind at least, serve to unveil the Prophet Joseph Smith and to restore the Church to its former purity. Only one edition was printed, the first. It was a vitriolic and scathing denouncement of Smith and his inner guard and accused them of moral, political and business corruption. Of course Joseph Smith responded quickly, and with the consent of the city council, ordered the offending press to be seized by the marshal. The press was smashed and the type broken and thrown into the streets. Nauvoo was in total confusion as its citizens read Law's words. Why would their Prophet embrace such a vile concept as polygamy? Their family orientation wouldn't allow its acceptance. Yet, why was Law's press destroyed by the Prophet?

Law's *Expositor* simply confirmed what the anti-Mormon leadership and press had been telling the people for a long while. Here was a chance for the once powerful to regain that power. Hancock County was tense both within the Church community and in the

county itself. The press began to clamour for the removal, if not the destruction, of the "Saints" and underscored their sentiments by proclaiming that no wife, sister or daughter in Hancock would be safe from the sex hungry, woman ravaging Mormons. The common people of Western Illinois were soon whipped into a frenzy.

The special charter which Bennett had created for Nauvoo made the city responsible for all law within its borders. Therefore, the city council, headed by Joseph Smith, and the Justice of the Peace, who was Joseph Smith, could squash any and all charges against a citizen of Nauvoo, if filed within the city. Therefore, William Law filed charges concerning his printing press in a court outside of Nauvoo and the court ordered Joseph to be arrested. Accounts of the time reveal that Joseph was perplexed. He didn't know whether to stay and fight or to flee to save his life as he had done so often before. In fact, some Mormon accounts say he got to the middle of the river before he felt that he had to return and take what would come or his people would be slaughtered. He also felt relieved that Governor Ford had given his assurance that he would be protected until a fair trial could be had. So, with great misgiving Joseph Smith surrendered himself, his brother Hyrum and several other Church leaders, and was taken to Carthage jail.

Governor Ford's real intent is not known, however, he was not in the area when the real turmoil began. Things had gone too far for a return to rational behavior without the cooling effect of the revenge which hung in the air being brought to fruition. That revenge was multi-faceted. It was revenge over a printing press. Revenge over lost political power. Revenge over lost jobs. Revenge over lost power within the Church. Revenge simply because of jealousy and envy. **The citizens of Hancock County, including Mormons and Masons alike, were too inflamed to think.**

A mob gathered at Carthage jail. The Carthage Greys stood ready for action. Over two hundred mobsters, faces blacked, stormed the jail. Hyrum Smith was shot through the door and died in a heap in the corner. Joseph rushed about the room returning fire from a gun which had been smuggled to him earlier that day. His bullets expended, the Prophet ran to the window and attempted to leap out while, in the words of one of his wives he exclaimed, "Oh, Lord. My God.", part of the Masonic Cry of distress. Yet, his plea fell on deaf ears. Having fallen to the ground, Smith's body was

dragged to the curb where it was riddled by a hail of bullets. The Prophet was dead! Surely the Church would collapse.

Who were the men in this mob? Was it a Masonic plot to kill the Prophet? Records of the time show that, indeed, many Masons were seen in the mob in Carthage. In fact, almost all the prominent families in Hancock County appear to have been represented. Does this mean that the Fraternity of Masons is responsible for Smith's death? Heavens No! As contemporary statements from that day record, even the leaders of the Church of Latter Day Saints felt the Fraternity was not involved, and that the mob was composed of individuals acting on individual vested interests. The time for revenge had been ripe and the division within the Church had acted as the catalyst for the tragic situation to explode.

In Smith's last few days, the future of the Church was in doubt and very bleak. It was crumbling from within, a process which usually is extremely difficult to stop. It was Smith's death and his elevation from Prophet to Martyr that united the Mormon people, endowed them with a new spiritual desire and empowered the Church in such a way that it moved ahead and has achieved unprecedented political and financial power in the United States.

After Joseph's death, Western Illinois became a war zone for many months as Mormons and non-Mormons tried to burn each other out. Rumors that the Nauvoo Legion would seek revenge were rampant and the frightened political leaders of Warsaw fled for their lives, yet, the Nauvoo Legion proved to be a paper tiger, all for show and without any military might. Several men were arrested and charged for the murders but, as can be expected, they were acquitted as a large mob outside the courthouse demanded their release and offered threats to witnesses.

In Warsaw, one of the prime suspects was already a member. Then to make matters worse, the Lodge voted to accept two others of those indicted in the case to become members. Their defense was that, until the men were convicted of the crime, the lodge had to consider them innocent. How convenient the literal interpretation of the law was for the lodge. However, Grand Lodge didn't see things in the same light and suspended Warsaw Lodge from membership. The Lodge didn't exist for over five years at which time they were reinstated. Yet, the Lodge, as well as the city of Warsaw, never

regained its prominence within the state, for the many leaders who fled in fear never returned to lead the city onward.

Yes, Freemasons were involved in the conflict at Nauvoo, but as individuals, not as representatives of the Fraternity. The tragic events of Nauvoo were not the result of a plot, but the culmination of the boiling social, religious, economic and, especially, political conflict of the day. The growing schism within the Church served to unleash the explosion at Carthage and to bring about events which have definitely changed the world in which we live. Greed for money and power often result in such tragedy.

Commentary

by Robert C. Barnard

MASONRY AND MORMONS IN WARSAW, ILLINOIS

On June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith, prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) and his brother, Hyrum, were murdered by a mob while incarcerated in the jail at Carthage in Hancock County, Illinois. The prophet was a Mason, having been raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Nauvoo after seeking and receiving a special dispensation for himself and his Mormon brethren. Hyrum Smith had been a Mason for years before the establishment of Masonry in Nauvoo in 1840.¹

The prophet and other Mormons seemingly became Masons as one means of making friends with prominent people and thus avoiding the bitter persecution which they had previously experienced in New York, Ohio and Missouri. Jealousy and fear soon spread to the surrounding gentile population in Illinois.

Records seem to show that a number of the foremost members of the mob that killed the Smith brothers were also Masons or became Masons soon after their deaths. About a hundred members of the mob were identified prior to the trial held in Carthage, Illinois in a real or staged effort to punish the murderers from May to October, 1844.² The majority of the mob seems to have been made up of "the entire settlement in and about Warsaw," except for a few families who were Mormon sympathizers.³

The writer's interest in these murders began many years ago as a small boy in Warsaw. He found that his father and his mother's father were amiable and brotherly men who agreed on every subject of discussion, except that of Mormon history in Hancock County. To the father, Mormons were honest, hard working people. To his mother's father, they were anathema; for he had been brought up hearing stories about Mormon horse stealing, house burnings and other outrages. Thus, the people of Hancock County are divided on the subject of Mormons even to the present day.

In 1844, when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed, Warsaw Lodge No. 21, A. F. & A. M., was flourishing.⁴ The Warsaw Masons who were indicted during the murder trial were, seemingly, actively supported by the lodge and the town.⁵

This fact is made more interesting because as Joseph Smith was killed and just before he fell from the second story window of the Carthage Jail, he made the Masonic sign of distress and uttered the words, "O, Lord, My God!" This was not the beginning of a prayer, for Joseph was never known to pray in that manner. He was desperately seeking protection from the members of the mob attacking him.⁶

Joseph Smith's wife, Zena Henderson Young, said in 1878: "I am the widow of a Master Mason who, when leaping from the window of the Carthage Jail, pierced with bullets, made the Masonic sign of distress, but those signs were not heeded, except by the God of Heaven."⁷

Let us examine information about several Warsaw Masons said to be implicated in the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. They appear to be representative of the face-blackened mob that appeared at Carthage Jail.

Levi Williams was a former Colonel of Militia, engaged in farming just South of Warsaw. He was still active as leader of a small company of about sixty men. Williams was supposedly heard to say, "Shoot him, damn him! Shoot him!", just after Joseph Smith fell from the window.⁸

J. C. Davis was captain of about sixty men in a Warsaw militia company. He was heading for Carthage with his men when he was met by a member of the Carthage Grays Militia who informed him to "come on and kill Joseph and Hyrum Smith, but do it quickly, since it must be done before Governor returns to Carthage." The guards had been told to load blanks in their rifles and fire into the air when the Warsaw men made their attack.⁹ (Dr. Charles Hay, father of Secretary of State John Hay, was a surgeon of this Company. He objected to taking part in the massacre and returned to Warsaw.)¹⁰

Mark Aldrich was postmaster of Warsaw, one of the first inhabitants when Warsaw was founded as Fort Edwards in 1814, and had been a Mason for over twenty years. He was captain of another Warsaw militia company at this time. After he moved from this area following the murders, he reportedly became sheriff of Tombstone and the first attorney general of the Territory of Arizona.¹¹

Probably the most active anti-Mormon man of the group was Thomas C. Sharp, editor of *The Warsaw Signal*. His editorials for years had seemingly called for violence to drive the Mormons from Nauvoo. After the death of Joseph and Hyrum, he wrote in his paper that the killers of the Smiths exhibited foolhardy courage, for they must have known or thought that they would bring down on themselves the vengeance of the Mormons." Possibly, Sharp was praising himself in the above quotation.¹²

When these men were brought to trial, "99 men were presented before finding 12 ignorant enough to act as jurors. The case was closed from the beginning. There was not a man on the jury, in the court, or in the county, that did not know that the defendants had done the murder. But it was not proven and the verdict of not guilty was right in law."¹³ This quotation is part of a statement from Warsaw's most famous man, the Honorable John Hay, Abraham Lincoln's personal secretary and Secretary of State for Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

For an account of how the Warsaw Lodge treated those accused of murder, we must look at the records. They show that Mark Aldrich, who was holding the office of steward at the time of the murders, was elected to the high office of Worshipful Master while under indictment.¹⁴

Three other Warsaw men under trial for murder were then brought into the lodge. J. C. Davis petitioned on September 23, 1844 and Aldrich and a Bro. Stephens were the committee to inquire into his character. Needless to say, he was found to meet the necessary qualifications and by November 18, he was a Master Mason. T. C. Sharp and Levi Williams petitioned on November 18, 1844 and soon passed through the degrees, being raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on March 17, 1845.¹⁵

Warsaw Lodge No. 21 explained in a letter written to Most Worshipful Brother Lusk, Grand Master of Illinois, that "no ancient landmarks of the institution were violated. The fact that the individuals were under indictment for the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith was discussed and the individuals were found to be worthy members of society, respected by their fellow citizens; no objection to the initiations therefore existed." Bro. John Montague of Warsaw Lodge wrote this explanation, adding that if the lodge had erred, they were not aware of it, and would not shrink from any responsibility.¹⁶

An interesting side note may be found in that prior to this investigation by the Grand Lodge, no record of return of work had been sent in. Perhaps by not reporting the initiations, embarrassing questions would not need to be answered.¹⁷

The exact progression of actions taken against Warsaw Lodge No. 21 (as well as the Carthage Lodge), is unknown but much can be surmised. Let it suffice to say that Warsaw Lodge seemingly ceased to function for a period of about six years.¹⁸

Various reasons might be advanced for this if questions are asked in Hancock County today, depending on whom you ask. A Mason might say that the lodge ceased for this period in order to keep out spurious and clandestine Masons from Nauvoo, who might intrude into the meetings. This wouldn't be completely accurate, however, because all the Mormons had moved to Utah in 1846 and Warsaw Lodge did not re-open until around 1850. ~~We do know that Warsaw (and Carthage) lodges were closed just after the Grand Lodge made their investigation.~~

When it began again, Warsaw Lodge became No. 257. The writer is a member of this lodge today, as well as Arts and Crafts Lodge No. 1017 of Bloomington.

Activities leading to the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and their aftermath, form a violent and sad episode in the History of Warsaw, of Hancock County, and of Masonry in that region. But no one who grew up in Warsaw can truly believe that one group was all wrong or the other group all right.

In 1844, Nauvoo had reached the gigantic size (for that time) of 15,000 souls, with more constantly arriving from England and the other states as fast as Mormon missionaries could convert them. Joseph Smith was (and is) believed by his followers to be the prophet of God and at that time held the rank of Major General of militia, with an army of thousands of soldiers in Nauvoo.

It is no wonder that the people of the little metropolis of Warsaw (population perhaps 3,000) were jealous and fearful of being swallowed up and pushed out by the Mormons. Also, out of 15,000 people, is it not natural to have some rogues among them? Perhaps the fearful gentiles of the region came to believe that all Mormons were "tarred with the same brush." This situation certainly does not condone the murders; it does help to explain them.

The Mormons of today seem to be fine citizens. The gentiles of Warsaw (which is nearly everyone, now) are the salt of the earth and association with them made Warsaw a paradise for a boy growing up in the 1930's and '40's.

The writer will proudly keep his membership in Warsaw Lodge No. 257 for life. He will consign all past iniquities—or honorable actions—to The Grand Architect of the Universe, who will soon judge us all by level, plumb and square and, hopefully, find us worthy of “that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.”

Notes

1. E. Cecil McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft Publishers, 1956), p. 13.
2. N. B. Lundwall, *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft Publishers, 1952), pp. 269-279.
3. Ibid., p. 270.
4. Records of Warsaw Lodge No. 21 for the year 1844.
5. Atlantic Monthly, December, 1869, p. 19.
6. McGavin, *Mormonism*—, p. 16.
7. McGavin, *Mormonism*—, p. 17.
8. Lundwall, *The Fate*—, p. 269.
9. Ibid., p. 268.
10. McGavin, *Mormonism*—, p. 24.
11. Lundwall, *The Fate*—, p. 269.
12. Ibid., p. 241.
13. McGavin, *Mormonism*—, p. 19.
14. Ibid., p. 22.
15. Ibid., p. 24-25.
16. Letter to Most Worshipful Bro. Lusk, Grand Master of Masons of Illinois in January, 1845, from Bro. John Montague, explaining the actions of Warsaw Lodge No. 21 in initiating men under indictment for murder.
17. Article in “The Living Age,” June, 1905.
18. Article in the Hancock County Journal of December, 1932.

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 Davis v. Beason, 133 U.S. 333 (1890);
 Black et al v. Utah, 3 Utah 2d 315, 283 P. 2d 1887;
 Mormon Church v. U.S., 136 U.S. 1 (1890)

The Court approved the confiscation of Church property because of violations of the law.

Cleveland v. U.S., 329 U.S. 14 (1946).

The Court held that Mormon Fundamentalists who took their plural wives across state lines violated the Mann Act and that the criminal intent necessary for conviction was not excused because of the religious belief of the defendants.

Cert. Denied, 350 U.S. 023 (1955).

This case involved a question of child custody. The father had three families and a total of twenty-six living children. The persons involved lived in a community which for many years had a reputation of having numerous polygamous families. (It has been claimed that there are about 30,000 polygamous families in Utah and the adjoining states and that the Attorney General of Utah has refrained from prosecuting these cases in his state on the ground that he believes that the United States Supreme Court with its present liberal views of individual and personal freedom would not sustain any sentences convicting the persons engaged in such a practice. The Black case cited above would indicate that the polygamous practice of the Mormons today is more prevalent than appears on the surface.) In November, 1982, Royston Potter, a policeman of Murray, Utah entered into a second marriage. When this was exposed he was fired. He contested this and decided to litigate the matter claiming that his constitutional rights had been violated. On April 27, 1984 a Federal Judge held against him. He appealed and in May, 1985 the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the decision of the trial court. He filed a petition for a writ of Certiorari in the Supreme Court of the United States: this was denied in October, 1985. The case is reported in 585 F. Supp. 1126 and in 760 F. 2d 1065.

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COLOPHON

Freemasonry and Nauvoo

Two thousand six hundred copies of this limited edition were manufactured by Pantagraph Printing Company of Bloomington, Illinois.

This book was photocomposed on an AM International Comp/Edit System using the type face known as Janson.

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